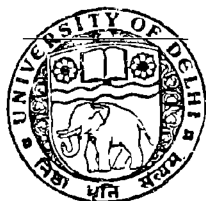

UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

ASPECTS OF ADVAITA



I. BRAHMAN AND MĀYA

BY

K. SUNDARARAMA IYER M. A.,

II. ADVAITA and MODERN THOUGHT

BY

Dewan Bahadur K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI B.A., B.L.,



SRIRANGAM

SRI VANI VILAS PRESS.

FOREWORD.

I deem it a great privilege to be asked to write a foreword to this valuable work of my esteemed friend Prof. K. Sundararaman, for whom, ever since the day I first met him, I had a paternal regard. Prof. Sundararaman was a great personage with lofty ideals, sincere patriotism, intense devotion and religious zeal. His learning was deep and analytical. He was very industrious. He began studying Sanskrit Philosophy after his retirement, at the age of 55, from the Lectureship on History at the Govt. College, Kumbakonam and became as proficient in Advaita Philosophy as he was in Western Philosophy. His lectures were always learned and informative. He could not brook antagonism while he was lecturing. I remember well the occasion at Trichinopoly when he was lecturing to a large audience, he quoted a passage from the Bible which was questioned

by a Christian Professer in the audience. Mr. Sundararaman got enraged, produced a copy of the Bible, pointed out the passage and asked the Christian Professor to read his Bible well. The first occasion when I brought him here for lecture was in 1903 when he delivered a lecture on the National Movement in Modern Europe at the anniversary of the Srirangam Club of which I was then the Secretary. In all his speeches and writings, he was very bold, courageous and outspoken. He would spare nobody, be he friend or foe. The pages of the *Hindu Message*—a weekly review of the Indian and world problems from the Hindu standpoint started under the joint editorship of the Professor and myself, in the year 1917—bear ample testimony to the vigour of his writings and the force of his arguments and the fearlessness of his style. His handwriting also was quite characteristic of him, being bold, round and quite legible. He was quite fearless in his arguments since he was absolutely sure of his grounds. His love of our ancient culture and of our hoary punya bhumi was very intense and

something indescribable. So also was his dislike of the *Novi Homines.* He longed very much for the revival of our ancient Gurukulam type of institutions to produce sages as of old. He never cared for his physical weaknesses; his mind was always strong and alert. He was a voracious reader of all the latest publications both in English and Sanskrit, on politics, philosophy, history and economics. Personally he was a very kind and estimable friend but when discussions arose on any subject he would mercilessly pound his opponents with his irrefutable arguments. He had a very noble heart ever extending a helping hand to all good causes. I may thus, go on *ad infinitum* dilating on his virtues but a foreword is not the occasion for it. I have already published some of his works *viz. Vedanta, Its Ethical Aspect, Vedanta, Its Doctrine of Divine Personality, and Dharma and Life, 2 Volumes.* I have now great pleasure in publishing this posthumous volume—*Aspects of Advaita* being ten lectures of Prof. Sundararaman to which are added six lectures on Advaita and Modern Thought

by his son Diwan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri. These lectures, if carefully studied, would make one fully conversant with the essentials of our unique ancient Advaita Philosophy of Sri Sankarabhagavatpadacharya. I take a real pleasure and pride in associating myself with Prof. Sundararaman and his worthy son through this foreword.

T. K. Balasubrahmanyam.

Professor K. SUNDARARAMA IYER

A SKETCH

(By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri).

Professor K. Sundararama Iyer was born at Palmaner in the North Arcot District on 4th October 1854. His early surroundings were those of an orthodox Hindu family. His father Sesha Iyer was employed all his life in the Revenue Department in the Tanjore District and died in 1873. Professor Sundararama Iyer studied in the Kumbakonam College and graduated from it in 1874. The family was then in indigent circumstances. Professor Sundararama Iyer entered service as a teacher in the Cochin Maharajah's High School at Ernakulam in 1874 and 1875. He was then appointed as a teacher in the Government Zillah School at Salem in 1876. In 1877 he was in Bellary as the second master in the Ward-law London Mission School. From there he went to Kumbakonam as the second

master of the Town High School. He then entered Government Service in the Educational Department as the second master in the Government Brennen Zillah School at Tellicherry. He was there from 7th April 1877 till 1st August 1881. He passed the M. A. Degree Examination and took the M. A. Degree in March 1881. Thereupon he was transferred by the Director of Public Instruction as a lecturer in the Kumbakonam College on 4th August 1881 and continued to be there for ten years.

In 1891 he went to Trivandrum as Tutor to His Highness the Second Prince of Travancore (Aswati Tirunal), as his services were lent on deputation by the British Government to the Travancore Government. Under his tuition the prince passed the B. A. Degree Examination and studied also for the M. A. Degree though he did not eventually appear for that examination. It was in Trivandrum that Professor Sundararama Iyer met the great Swami Vivekananda. The Swamiji stayed in his house for some days then and his future greatness was realised and foreseen by Professor Sundararama Iyer

In 1894 the Professor reverted to the British Educational Service at the Kumbakonam College. He was transferred to the Rajahmundry College and remained there during 1895 and 1896. His second son died in December 1896 and this was a great blow to him. In 1897 he joined duty at the Kumbakonam College and served there till he retired after completing 30 years of service in 1907, when he was 53 years of age. In September 1906 he lost the bulk of his savings in the great crash of Arbuthnot and Co. But he longed for rest so that he might study the Hindu scriptures and did not apply for any extension of service, though extensions of service were being freely applied for and granted at that time. He had already met a great *Guru* and Yogin named Sri Krishnananda Swami of Hindupur and learnt the practical aspects of the spiritual Sadhana from him. He studied Sri Sankaracharya's world-famous bhashyas on the Prasthanatraya under the great Advaita Pandit Vedanta Kesari Ganapati Sastriar.

In 1909 he was persuaded to accept the Principalship of the Hindu College at Tinnevelly

which was then in some trouble and had to be steered with wisdom and courage. But his heart was with his favourite books and he longed to go back to them. He retired from the College in 1909 and spent the rest of his time in study and contemplation. He and Mr. T. K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer edited the *Hindu Message* from 1917 to 1924. He died in 5th May 1938.

Professor Sundararama Iyer's biography is being written *in extenso* by me and will be published soon. I shall not anticipate here what I shall say therein. He had a warm heart for his friends and he was sincerely and deeply and fondly attached to Mr. T. K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer. He was a person of fine sensibilities and quick sympathies, and he gave unstinted aid to those who were in need of it. His life was dedicated to learning and religion and he always lived in the light of high ideals. He had remarkable gifts as a teacher and he was an able and fluent speaker. His frequent contributions on topical matters to the *Hindu* were always spotted out and appreciated. He published many works and showed excellence in diverse fields



ASPECTS OF ADVAITA.

BRAHMAN AND MAYA—

Experience as the One Self.

I. INTRODUCTORY.

THE Vedantic Doctrine of experience (or, Reality) as interpreted to his school of disciples by Sankaracharya has been much misunderstood and attacked by numerous foes from his own time to the present day. The reason has been, chiefly, that he taught it not as a mere theory, or mere *ipse dixit*, as prejudiced persons assume, but as Experience, Knowledge, or Illumination, supreme, ultimate, innermost,—the basal Self of all phenomenal existence and activity, material, mental, spiritual, personal, or other, in this world or elsewhere. He taught it directly and *by word of mouth*—at least in the first instance—to his disciples, as we gather

from a direct statement made by one of the foremost of them, Padmapada,—though he used the Three Prasthanas (sources of systematised knowledge), *viz.*, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, and the Sariraka-Mimamsa-Sutras, as the vehicle for conveying to the world his teaching in all its simplicity, fulness, and implications. Later on the teachings must have been gathered together and written down under his direction and supervision, and published everywhere by means of manuscript copies eagerly sought all over the land by enthusiastic followers of the Vedic religion. We learn from one of Sankara's works that, in his own days, as subsequently, he had numerous determined opponents who upheld the Bheda-Vada—the doctrine of Pluralism, as it is now called in the West—in various forms on the basis of mere analogies biological or mechanical. In a passage of his Bhashya on the Taittiriya-Upanishad, the Purvapakshin is made to say :—"How is it that, when there are many opponents, you are an upholder of the doctrine of the One Existence?" To which the (Monistic) Vedantin replies :—"To me an auspicious circumstance this which you have mentioned, *viz.*, that against me who maintain the doctrine of the

One Existence only there are many opponents who postulate Plurality (of existences). I shall overcome all of them, and I shall now begin the discussion." This passage enables us to confirm the substantial accuracy of the later portraiture of his life as one spent in constant controversy and contention against numerous opponents representing various schools of speculation. We also see with what alacrity he welcomed opposition, what majestic confidence of success marked his entry into and progress along the arena of discussion, and how he came to be proclaimed or accepted as a Loka-Guru (World-Teacher). His controversial campaign not only met the requirements of his age, but accorded well with such methods of interpretation and exposition of thought as were still current among the Vedic and philosophical schools of the land,—and his skill as a dialectician produced so profound and colossal an impression and gained such wide acceptance as to make his polemical progress over all quarters of the land—*Sankara-Dig-Vijaya*, as it is still called—an event of ever-lasting significance. His dialectics still remain an inviting study and possess an enchantment all its own,—one not realisable except by those who have familiarised them-

selves with its methods of developing the argument so as to establish the true purport of each Vedic passage (the "*Vishaya-Vakya*," as it is called) taken up for discussion.

We shall now deal with two topics which, at our very start, are clearly of first importance (1) Is Sankara's doctrine of Experience supported by the Three Prasthanas? (2) Can we claim for it the support of a great and weighty tradition before Sankara's time?

As regards the first point, all modern authorities, Western and Indian, have totally failed in arriving at an agreement regarding the dates of the Upanishads and other ancient Vedantic authorities. The man in the street is necessarily inclined to accept as gospel truth the side on which the big battalions are ranged. But this rough and ready way of arriving at a decision may suit us well in ordinary life, but can never be regarded as satisfactory when we are engaged in the investigation of such ultimate problems as the supreme reality, the goal of life, the methods of purification of the soul, etc. Here at least the influence of personality or partisanship ought not to have weight, and each

individual or school must, without rest and without haste, continue its endeavours and inquiries from age to age so as to illuminate and influence the human mind to an ever-widening extent. We are not in a position to apply any uniform and reliable test for deciding which of the Upanishads are really old and which are not. If we are to regard as old those from which passages are taken up for discussion in the Sutras of Badarayana, then Svetasvatara, Kaushitaki and other Upanishads will have to be regarded as old. And yet Dr. Roer—as we learn from Colonel Jacob—holds that the Svetasvatara "does not belong to the series of the more ancient Upanishads" and that it was "composed not long before the time of Sankaracharya." If, secondly, we resolve to regard as old those Upanishads which have received the honour of being commented upon by Sankaracharya, then we have to take account of the fact that he is the author of Bhashyas on the Svetasvatara and the Nrisimha-Tapaniya Upanishads. *Thirdly*, if as some scholars hold, the Svetasvatara is "the oldest Upanishad in which the illusory nature of the world is plainly taught" (Col. Jacob), and is therefore clearly post-Buddhistic, we have to account for the fact that Ramanujacharya who

denies that doctrine accepts this same Upanishad as of equal authority with the rest and quotes from it throughout his great work, the Sri-Bhashya. All other schools of Vedantic thought in India, too, accept this Upanishad as having the same authority as any other. The late eminent scholar, A. E. Gough, has also fully agreed that "its teaching is the same as that of other Upanishads,—the teaching that finds its full and legitimate expression in the system known as the Vedanta." The truth is that in India the authenticity of an Upanishad is not made to depend on its date—for the determination of its date, like that of every other part of the Veda has ever defied, as it does even to-day, the ingenuity however persistent, of the scholar and the antiquarian,—but on the circumstance that it has ever been included in the canon accepted as classical by the Vedic Sakha (school or succession of teachers) to which it belongs. Whenever questions of date are raised, much heat is caused, but rarely or never does there spring forth the light which is calculated to remove our ignorance of the stages of development in the growth of a doctrine or of the conditions which originally gave rise to it. It is easy to see

that questions like these can never be decided by counting votes; the still, small voice behind continues to revolt against such a decision, and often the whirligig of time is known to bring its revenges.

We pass to the *second* topic, *viz.*, Has the Vedantic Doctrine of Experience the support of a great and weighty tradition before Sankara's time? Dr. Thibaut has said in his Introduction to his translation of Sankara's Bhashya on the Sutras of Vyasa:—"Sankara does not, on the whole, impress one as an author particularly anxious to strengthen his own case by appeals to ancient authorities." This view is clearly a mistake. For, in his various Bhashyas, he refers, expressly or by implication, to the teachers of his school who lived before him. As our present purpose is to give brief statements regarding the leading tenets of his doctrine and interpretation of Vedanta, and as this first section is intended as a brief preliminary to it, we shall content ourselves with but two references. At the commencement of his Bhashya on the Taittirya-Upanishad, Sankara says:—"I offer my constant obeisance to those Gurus (teachers) who, in former times, have commented upon all the Upanishads by

explaining the words, the sentences, and the proofs." Again, in his Gita-Bhashya, Sankara makes the following broad pronouncement:—"Whatsoever one's mastery of all branches of knowledge, one who does not know the Sampradaya (the traditional interpretation of a context or passage) must be discarded in the same way as we discard all perverse and ignorant people." Also, in his Bhashya on the Prasna-Upanishad, Sankara addresses an appeal couched in severe terms of denunciation to all who attempt to learn for themselves this Vedic doctrine of Experience without the aid of a teacher who can convey its true import according to the traditional interpretation:—"Give up all your egoistical fancies and listen to the meaning of the Sruti. Independent effort, even if continued for a hundred years, cannot disclose the true import of the Sruti to those whose heads are filled with self-conceit and who foolishly assume that they can know it for themselves (and without a qualified teacher [illegible])."

A third point which we must bear in mind at the outset is that Sankara does not build up a philosophical system of his own, or even expound the

doctrine of a philosophical school or sect to which he belonged, nor the interest of those who are interested in it. What, then, is the exact relation of the doctrine of Experience or the One Self to its basic source, the Vedas? [illegible] mention. Sankara's aim was to formulate the synthetic teaching of the Veda (Samanvaya, as it is called by Vyasa) without mixing it with, or reading into it, any non-Vedic doctrines, beliefs, or traditions, however venerable or popular. The aim of the Veda is to correct man's weak nature and his desires and to guide him along the path which leads him to the goal of life. Hence, it is regarded in India as an independent source of knowledge on a par with sensuous perception (*Pratyaksha*) and the process of ratiocination (*Anumana*). Sankara declares: "The authoritativeness of the Veda with regard to the matters stated by it is independent and direct, just as the light of the sun is the direct means of our knowledge of form and colour." We cannot understand the Veda in the light of any other authority—even that of the Agamas; on the other hand, the Veda, as traditionally interpreted and understood among the succession of disciples preserved without interruption

from Sri Narayana himself, is the supreme authority in the light of which we have to test the value of all other sources of spiritual knowledge, whatever their pretensions or the vogue they have gained among men. These other sources have value only in so far as they accord with the teaching of the Veda (or are at least not inconsistent with it),—and they lose all claim for acceptance or rocognition, when they are directly in conflict with it. We must not also forget that even such recognised and popular sources of spiritual knowledge as the Itihasas and Puranas can be consulted or accepted as authoritative, in regard to our Vedic doctrine of Experience *only* when the traditional interpretation (or Sampradaya) current among the enlightened disciples and teachers of this (*i.e.*, the *Advaitic*) *school of Mimamsa* (*inquiry*) fails to clear up any doubts or difficulties which may arise and demand a solution. Hence we gladly quote Dr. Thibaut's view that Sankara's statement or interpretation of the true doctrine marks "a strictly orthodox reaction against all combination of non-Vedic elements of belief and doctrine with the teaching of the Upanishads." It, therefore, cannot but seem strange that Dr. Thibaut should also hold that "the philosophy

of Sankara would on the whole stand nearer to the teaching of the Upanishads than the Sutras of Badarayana." This view is entirely untenable, for all schools of Vedanta are agreed that the Sutras are intended to present the essence of the doctrine of the Upanishads in a reasoned form free from all doubts, imperfections, and inconsistencies. Sankara makes for himself the *significant* avowal and claim:— "The Sutras have merely the purpose of stringing together the flowers of the sentences of the Vedanta. The sentences of the Vedanta referred to in the Sutras are discussed by us here. For, the realisation of the Brahman (the one Self) is produced by the determination, consequent on discussion, of the true purport of the sentences of the Vedanta, not by any other sources of knowledge." No Indian Vedantin, whatever the school to which he owns allegiance, can be found willing to admit that the Sutras of Vyasa do not teach the essential tenets of his school, or be indifferent to a proposition of that kind. The Sutras owe the authority they command to the fact that they contain in a convenient, concise and systematised form the teachings lying scattered in the voluminous range of the Vedic revelation known as the Upanishads. In

one place of his Sutra-Bhashya, Sankara calls Vyasa by the designation of *Vedacharya*. Vyasa's function as an Acharya is to teach the world the essentials of the Vedic doctrine, besides compiling and distributing the Vedas into Sakhas. The Sariraka-Mimamsa—otherwise called Brahma-Sutras—was composed by him in the fulfilment of that mission and function, to clear all doubts regarding the true doctrine of Experience (Brahman) as contained in the Upanishads, to expand hints, to connect what is seemingly unconnected, to reconcile what seems conflicting, to contrive and construct a harmonious whole which will attract, inspire, enlighten, and satisfy the human mind. Finally, before leaving the present topic, we may briefly state that, when it is once admitted, as has been done by Dr Thibaut and others like him who hail from the West that Sankara's interpretation of the doctrine of Experience is in entire consonance with the contents of the Upanishads everything that has to be said in its favour has been said and that he stands fully justified before the world. The Sutras of Vyasa and even the Bhagvad-Gita are only classed as Smritis, and owe their unquestionable authority and universal acceptance to the fact that they con-

form in all essentials and even wholly to the doctrine of the Upanishads of the Holy Vedas.

Though we have already made it clear in what sense the (Monistic) Doctrine of Experience is entitled to claim that it is alone founded on the Veda, we think it necessary also at the outset to state that there is a further special sense and significance which that statement bears in reference to the ultimate, supreme, and fundamental feature of that doctrine—*viz.*, (1) that *Experience* —the one, absolute, innermost reality, Self or Atman —means and implies, a realisation that is ever present, and always possible to us, *even while we are here*, however hidden it may be by the limiting conditions to which the living, roving, incarnating soul is subject owing to its primeval ignorance of the truth; (2) that this realisation (and all that it means) results from the well-known Maha-Vakyas (or Vedic sentences), the full significance of which will be dwelt upon later in its proper place in our exposition. It is this speciality of our doctrine—what is known as *Jivanmukti*, (or liberation from ignorance even while here) resulting from what is technically known as *Sabdaparoksha*, knowledge (of the

innermost reality) resulting from the spoken sentence —that gives a special justification for the (Monistic) Vedantin's claim that this Doctrine of Experience as the One Self is alone truly and ultimately founded on the Veda. Sankara says (*Svatmanirupanam*, Sloka 22)—"When all the objects perceived by the senses are stultified, then, from the *worldly* point of view (*lokatah*), we have the assurance that nothing else is known as existing (siddha); then (also) through the Veda, is known as existing (*vedatah-siddha*) that (existence or reality) without whose support (as the perceiving and witnessing Intelligence) nothing else (in the world) can exist." When the Guru gives his final instruction through the Maha-Vakyas of the Upanishads to the prepared and qualified disciple, the direct knowledge of the Atman (*i.e.*, Experience as the One Self, absolute and free from all the limitations of matter) is alone existent as the Real, Intelligent and Blissful, (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*).

It is this doctrine—or what seems an approach to it—that is referred to by the living British poet, Mr. Maurice Baring, in his little poem, "The Vale—"

"I have loved words which left the soul
with wings,
Words that are windows to eternal things."

Another English poet seems to say something similar, but less suggestive of what we have in view—

"Breathe on Me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what thou dost love,
And do what thou dost do."

It would be nearer to the truth if this latter poet had said—"that I may *be* what thou *art*." But his reference to "the Breath of God" as the source of the immediate and direct knowledge of what he does (or is) is what the Vedanta has in view. For, the Upanishads delare that "the Vedas are the Breath of God" (*Yasya nisvasitam vedah*) and that they form the original and only source, not only of the world beyond the senses but of the immediate realisation of the absolute and innermost Self, Reality, or Experience.

We may add here a few further remarks—though its full significance will become clear only

after frequent repetition and deep meditation — to explain that, when it is said above that the Maha-Vakyas of the Upanishads *give rise* to the realisation of the Self as the One Reality, it does *not* contradict the fundamental fact (and idea) that the Experience (the One innermost Self as the Absolute or Reality) is *ever existing* as the intelligent witness, and cannot therefore be said to arise as an effect of the Guru's teaching of the Maha-Vakyas. If this latter conception is true, then, indeed, the Atman, Experience, or Reality (of the Vedanta) would be what is technically known as *Anyasesha* (a consequence of what has gone before, and therefore a knowledge dependent on, related to, and implied in, something else, and so not absolute and independent). The Atman—*i.e.*, Experience, Absolute, Noumenal, One – is really *agatartha*, unlike anything known before. It is not even knowable, for that implies a triplicity of knower, known, and knowledge. Still, the help of the Veda and of an Acharya is needed to remove the primeval veil of matter (Ajnana) which bars from us the true self-effulgence of the Atman and has thereby brought our mind and senses into full operation so as to make us the slaves, willing or

unwilling, of the experiences, painful or pleasurable, of the material world. The following passage from the great Vedantic teacher, Ramatirtha, may be quoted in this connection :—"The Veda is in itself a source of true knowledge regarding all matters of which it treats,—and especially, regarding the realisation of (the true Self which is) the permanent and absolute entity desired by all (living) souls : and hence, it also reveals the means to such a realisation (which cannot be gained by sense-perception or the method of reasoning, etc.) to those who desire and seek them with all zealous effort. As this permanent and absolute object of desire is no other than Moksha *i.e.*, deliverance from the life of wandering in the phenomenal universe), we see that the *real purport* of the Veda is to reveal the means to such deliverance." Various passages to this effect can be quoted from the Upanishads, but the following will suffice. "The One (Reality) to which all Vedas lead is that which is the Self of us all." "When that (Reality) is known thus, we pass beyond death,—and to gain this goal there is no other path."

To explain and illustrate how the Acharya effectuates his revelation of the Atman to his trained

and qualified disciple by the use of the Vedic Maha-Vakyas, the Vedantin narrates the story of the *Ten Adult Simpletons.* They crossed a river, and then began counting their number to know if all had crossed. In so doing, each and every one omitted himself, and counted nine only. There was much bewailing and breaking of hearts among the whole party. A merciful by-stander interposed and told the first person who again counted nine,—"the tenth is yourself." When this sentence had been uttered, there at once came to him (and then to each of the others in his turn) the sudden flash of knowledge regarding the existence of his own self, formerly forgotten from simple ignorance. The analogy is clear, and need not be dwelt upon.

The supreme importance of the Veda (Vedanta) thus lies in the fact that it alone can reveal the Innermost Self, the Experience Absolute, the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* which transcends the entire phenomenal universe of matter—and also (reveal) the means to its revelation or realisation through the disappearance of that universe which is the effect of the evolution of primeval ignorance. The Veda also treats of various other important and related

topics such as Creation, Karma, Upasana, etc., all of which have their own values. But these values are all subordinate to the supreme value of liberation from the bondage of ignorance and the resulting life of mingled pleasures and pains in the material world of phenomena. When this freedom ensues, the veil of Maya is removed and we reach the goal of self-effulgence in the supreme reality and bliss of the Atman,—or Experience, one and absolute. Without creation, the entire living universe of souls (*jivas*) will be immersed in the ocean of oblivion which overwhelms all in the state of *pralaya* (destruction of all the forms of matter in manifestation) and in which none will be able to go through the activities which are necessary in order to accomplish the aims of life. It is by activity alone that man can live his physical and mental life on earth and fulfil his mission and purpose in the place there assigned to him according to his previous work and worth. Karma is intended (according to the Shastras which enjoin them) to produce the purity of mind which discards all purely worldly aims and desires which bind us to the life of births and re-births, never-ending and still-beginning, which keep us far from the blissful realisation of the One

Self. Upasana (or the worship and meditation of a Deva, of even the supreme Personal God in the form of Vasudeva) is intended to produce,—through the eight-fold process of Yoga, or through any other prescribed form of Dhyana—the one-pointed (*ekagra*) condition of the mind through which alone the mind can reach the state of *laya* (dissolution) when the realisation of the self-effulgence of the Atman is reached as the ultimate goal of the Vedic teaching given by the Sad-Guru.

One last point must be mentioned before we close this introductory section. All the objections to this fundamental Indian doctrine of the supreme importance of the Veda (including Vedanta) as the one source of super-sensuous knowledge right up to the realisation of the supreme Atman have been met by the Rishi Jaimini (the author of the Purva-Mimamsa Sutras) and by other authors following in his wake down to the present day. It is beyond our present purpose to enter into details. We wish only to state here that there can be no true knowledge (*Prama*) without a recognised means (or instrument) of such knowledge (*Pramana*, as it is called). In India the three accepted Pramanas

(instruments or sources of true knowledge) are (1) sense-perception ; (2) the process of reasoning, deductive or inductive, upon what is perceived by the senses so as to draw from it correct inferences and thereby add to our knowledge ; (3) direct verbal instruction from one who knows the truth regarding what we do not perceive by the senses or cannot gather as conclusions from premises through the established processes of reasoning. As regards this *third* source of knowledge,—technically known as *apta-vachana*—, any human being who plays the part of an *apta* may err from the effects of total ignorance (*apratipatti*) or of wrong apprehension (*anyatha-pratipatti*), etc. But the Veda—which is also a form of *apta-vachana*—has ever been regarded as the eternal, original, and beginningless source of all knowledge leading to the ultimate liberation (*Mukti*) of the living soul and its realisation of the innermost bliss of the supreme, Noumenal Self or Atman. It is *ordinarily* held that not even Vasudeva, the one supreme Personal God, is the author of the Veda, but that he is only the revealer of it. It has ever been recognised on all hands that it has been transmitted by word of mouth from the supreme Lord Narayana Himself, and

that even the Rishis—the *seers* (of the Veda)—revealed to their disciples what they had previously only heard by word of mouth from their own teachers in the lineal succession from the supreme God Himself and thereby had become part of the contents and furniture of their mind. The Veda is *also* regarded as eternal and beginningless (*anadi*), because Brahma,—the creator of the universe to whom it was first revealed by the supreme Narayana,—was enabled to perform his function of creating the world only with its aid. Hence it is older than even Brahma (the *first* divine personality among the three Hindu personal deities, collectively called Trimurti). Hence also it remains as eternal as the supreme Divine Person. Indeed, the Veda—as already stated above—claims to be the "Breath of God," and hence it is not to be regarded as different from his person. Hence, also, it is impossible to seek for a confirmation of its claims as a revelation from any other source. The only confirmation that is obtainable is the considered and conscientious avowal of those sages who have obtained the illumination—possible only to the perfected Yogi—which reveals, among the experiences of previous lives imprinted in the mind, those

Vedic texts, which having been taught to such a Yogi by his own teacher in a previous incarnation, is recognised therein as part of its contents and furniture, then proclaimed as such to the world outside, and recognised and accepted as authoritative by other equally illumined seers and sages.





II

THE INQUIRY INTO THE SELF

—Its Extent and Value.

OF the three great source-books of the Vedanta Doctrine of Experience, the *Sariraka-Mimamsa Sutras* of Vyasa is the one which attempts to present it as a complete and harmonious system. Without Sankara's Bhashya the Sutras would have remained a mystery outside the school of disciples to which it belonged. In the Bhashya itself there are numerous pitfalls, dark corners, lanes and alleys, shoals and depths where we are apt to get entangled if we discard the help of the enlightened disciples of to-day who preserve and can impart the spirit of the teaching and the traditions in which it is embodied. The doctrine is now as ever imperfectly understood by outsiders, and hence have risen all the controversial troubles and distractions among the champions of the different schools. The Bhashyas themselves are invariably taught to the

disciples of each school by authoritative expounders and it would have been best that this ancient practice had been strictly adhered to though it may seem intolerable or inconvenient in a turbulent, meddlesome, and iconoclastic age in which democratic standards prevail in every department of life. But even before the present epoch of unflinching curiosity and wholesale publicity had arrived, Sankara's system began to be attacked by aggressive opponents of rival schools and was even then defended with zeal and effectiveness by its own eager and enthusiastic adherents. A great and even unrivalled polemical literature has grown up and is still receiving slight additions, but fortunately only at distant intervals of time.

The Maharshi Vasishtha, a mind-born son of Brahma who is regarded as the *first* living soul (*Prathama-jiva*) who realised the Self-Effulgence of the Innermost Bliss of the One Absolute Experience, has said :—"The one remedy for the never-ending, still-beginning disease of Samsara—*i.e.*, the successive lives of wandering in various regions of the phenomenal universe—is the inquiry 'Who am I ?' 'Whose is this Samsara ?' etc.

ceases when true discriminative knowledge is attained." When the first Sutra of Vyasa speaks of "the desire to know Brahman" (*Brahma-jijnasa*) the word *jijnasa* has been given the transferred—*i.e.*, not the actual, but the intended—meaning (not the *vachyartha*, but the *lakshyartha*), *viz.*, *vichara* or act of inquiry. The reason given for the change is that desire is only a *feeling purely within* the mind, and not an *activity* expressing itself outside such as is implied in the attempt to know the absolute Self which is beyond the mind by instruction from, and discussion with a qualified teacher. Now, we have to raise and answer the question whether the inquiry into, and exposition of, the Vedanta Doctrine of Experience—or Illumination Absolute which is to lead to the liberation from the phenomenal life of Samsara—is to include the entire range of controversial literature above referred to, —or only the Bhashyas of Sankaracharya together with the necessary explanations of such obscurities and difficulties as may arise therein with the aid which can be derived from his immediate disciples or others who have subsequently rendered a similar service,—or lastly, only such simple personal instruction as the Guru (to whom the disciple resorts)

thinks necessary and desireable for attainment of the latter's aim of mental enlightenment and the resultant realisation of the self in truth and in spirit.

The answer is or seems simple enough—viz., the nature of the effort needed depends upon the present spiritual status or stage the seeker has attained in his journey towards the goal. But such an explanation is too vague and general to give satisfaction, and so we must enter into more detail. For, we must not forget that the Vedanta is not a mere speculation or theory, or an occupation for learned leisure, but implies a life of practice according to a qualified Guru's instructions in order to gain certain spiritual values. The processes known as Sravana and Manana are together intended to serve as a method of *logical* and *metaphysical* inquiry into the contents of the Upanishads so as to ascertain the purport of their teaching in regard to reality and the true method of realising it. The process of Yoga or Dhyana consists in the practice of certain methods of mental concentration so that it might serve as a means to the Innermost Bliss of the Absolute Experience which is "One" only without a second, and which, when realised as truly taught

by the Veda and Guru, will remove even while we are here, the miseries of life within the limits of the universe of phenomena.

All these processes may together mean much or little for the disciple, and that depends upon the disciple's own stage of spiritual development. In the case of one in a highly advanced stage, the teaching conveyed by such sentences as "not this, not this" (*neti, neti,*) "*here* (*i,e.*, in the Self) there is no plurality at all" (*neha-nanasti kinchana*)—from the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad—is enough to destory the error (or illusion) that the external world of matter alone is real and to make the Innermost Bliss of Self shine in all its glory. It is such advanced disciples that Sankara has in view when he says in an oft-quoted passage :—" If such sentences as '*neti, neti*' are enough to produce the illumination of the Self in those who desire to get rid of the bondage of life in the world of phenomena, then the reading of the Three Prasthanas will turn out to be similar to the discovery of a rat by the process of digging out a whole mountain to its foundations underneath." It is only for the less advanced disciples that the Vedas intend—and in

the measure proportioned to each—the processes of Sravana and Manana which prepare the ground for the practical processes which lead to the interior self-illumination of the Bliss which is one and absolute, and beyond all phenomenal limitations. We shall just mention two or three passages with a view to show with what unanimity the Upanishadic texts proclaim the truth, though the expressions used may slightly differ in different contexts according to local requirements. The *Kena-Upanishad* speaks of the Self within us as "the eye of the eye," "the ear of the ear", "the mind of the mind," etc., and then proceeds to give the significant and expressive teaching :

"Know *That* (the Self) alone to be Brahman, not *this* which you are engaged in serving with engrossing and absorbing diligence,"—this latter object being *external* and *material* in its own place, nature and extent, *viz.*, the material body, the five senses and their objects, the mind, and, lastly, the personal god one worships and his images of all kinds. The Taittiriya Upanishad (Brahma Valli), the Mandukya-Upanishad, etc., give the same teaching in essence, though seemingly different.

The former refers to the *five* sheaths (Kosas) of the innermost Brahman,—the latter to the *three* bodies (*sariras*) or conditions *avasthas, sthanas or upadhis*) of the Brahman or Atman which is *Turiya—i.e.*, the fourth, or the unconditioned. The numerical simplicity of the latter—*three* conditions or quarters (*padas*), instead of *five* sheaths (*Kosas*) as in the former—is only one of mere seeming. For, the *sukshmasarira or svapna avastha* (of the *Mandukya*) includes the *second, third,* and *fourth kosas viz.*, the *pranamaya*, the *manomaya*, and the *vijnana maya*) of the Taittirya. The *annamaya* and *anandamaya* of the Taittiriya correspond to the *jagrat* and *sushupti* of the Mandukya.

The distinctive feature of the teaching in the Mandukya Upanishad—that which is not brought out so clearly or fully in the Kena, Taittiriya, or any other Upanishads—is the contrast betwen the *vyashti* (separate, individual) and the *samashti* (collective, universal) aspects of the various conditions or bodies (and the personalities appropriate to each) in the phenomenal life of the universe. But the distinctions, whether of bodies or personalities do not affect the one absolute reality, the innermost

Self, which is undifferentiated and non-dual (*advaita*). Further, even in the phenomenal universe, the part (*vyashti*) is included in—and, therefore, not different from—the whole (the *samashti*). Furthermore, the individual (and small) personalities—the *vyashti jivas*—associated with partial conditions, bodies, or states in the phenomenal world are distinguished from the big personalities associated with universal or collective aspects of the same world only to help the former in meditating (Upasana) upon the latter so as to attain to the spiritual fruits and developments thereby attainable. These methods of meditation are the various *Vidyas* (or *Upasanas*) taught in the Chhandogya-Upanishad. But in all these Vidyas, the consciousness of the difference between the individual (worshipper's) personality and his God's collective (or universal) personality forming the object of his worship remains persistent; and the aim in each and all of them is to reach the high status and gain the gifts—happiness, power, dignity, etc.—aimed at or attainable through their right and eager performance. In this connection we may point out two circumstances worthy of remembrance. In the first place, the three universal (or collective) per-

sonalities—and their appropriate methods of meditation—do not stand on the same level. The Gods known as Vaisvanara (for *sthulasamashti*, the collective *external* material body) and Hiranygarbha (for the collective *internal* or mental body) are on a level far inferior to the supreme deity, the personal God known in India as Isvara (presiding over the *collective* causal body or *Karana-sarira*) who is the omnipotent creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. The meditation on Vaisvanara leads to a kind of happiness only analogous though quantitatively superior, to what we ordinary men experience here without such meditation. The worship of Hiranyagarbha leads to the joys of Brahma-loka, —but the worshipper here has to wait till his deity's official duties cease, and then passes with the latter into the state of *Mukti* (liberation from phenomenal life in the universe). In the *second* place, all these processes of meditation are taught chiefly (or only) with a view to produce *Vairagya*, the absence of all desire or craving for all transient states of happiness in the worlds above, however superior to those allotted to us here. Some Vedantins, however,—but they do not belong to our Monistic school—claim that the worship and meditation of Isvara the

omnipotent and omniscient God who presides over the *collective* causal body or *karana-avastha*) leads to a permanent state of pure spiritual happiness in a high and exalted state of existence (or world) called Vaikuntha (or Kailasa) which is beyond all merely material—and therefore low and unsatisfying—associations, as being made of pure *Sattva-guna*, and not mixed up with the two other material substances known as *Rajas* (desire-element) and *Tamas* (the element of inactivity arising from incapacity to discriminate truth from error). Even granting that such a world (or state of existence) exists, it does not rise beyond the sense of separateness (or duality) existing between the divine creator and ruler and the creatures over whom he rules and dominates with unquestioned sway. The Upanishad distinctly states :—"Fear exists so long as there is a second"; "When Unity is perceived, where is ignorance or sorrow ?" Only when the sense of separateness arising from the idea of pluralism (*i.e.*, from the existence of the individual selves, the worlds above and below, and the supreme personal Lord of the universe) vanishes can we transcend the state of Samsaric wandering and reach the Innermost Bliss of Self, the One only without a second.

All that we have said above may be summed up by referring to the various grades of aspirants (*adhikaris*) after spiritual progress and values recognised in the Vedanta. *First*, we have the one who has reached the highest stage (*uttamadhikari*) —referred to in a passage above quoted from Sankaracharya's *Paramartha-Sara*—who, the moment his teacher explains the true purport of one (or more than one) such passages as "*Neti, neti*," attains to liberation from the bondage of material existence and realises the Self in all its glory. *Secondly*, we have one in the middle stage (*madhyamadhikari*) who is taught the four Maha-Vakyas (great sentences) in their full significance, and that is followed by the intended result, *viz.*, the same liberation and self-illumination as before. The best known of these Maha-Vakyas is *Tattvam-asi* (That thou art), and is ordinarily designated as the *Upadesa-Vakya*, "the sentence containing the instruction" regarding the one absolute reality, the Innermost Bliss (of Love), the Atman. The teaching is followed by the disciple's proclamation of his self-illumination as contained in what is known as the *Anubhava-Vakya* (the sentence proclaiming the experience)—*viz.*, "I am the Brahman" (*aham-*

Brahma-asmi). Thirdly, we reach the man in the lowest stage among the aspirants after the ultimate knowledge of the Vedanta,—the *adhamadhikari*, for whose benefit the Bhashyas on the "Three Prasthanas" are fully and at length taught so as to remove all doubts and difficulties and thus to enable the seeker after the absolute Experience, the one Self, to devote himself, without haste and without rest, to the practical methods leading to the same final accomplishment as before. *Lastly*, there is one in a stage lower than the lowest (the *adhama-dhama-adhikari*) in which the mind of the seeker is ever apt to be influenced by the objections advanced against the Monistic Doctrine of Experience by the followers of Pluralism in one of its numerous forms and by the arguments by which they seek to establish their own theories and creeds. Such a man is ever engaged in the interesting pastime and absorbing pursuit of endless logomachy and logic-chopping, but he never advances a step while here towards the attainment of the goal of life. He is the counterpart of the European type of philosopher whose supreme aim is ever to investigate and build up a synthesis and system, but never to reach or scale the pinnacle of a wisdom which enchants and

enchains us both by its source in the Holy Vedas (as Schopenhauer himself calls them) and through our direct and soul-filling contact with those teachers and sages of to-day (and of the past) who represent the continuous and unbroken chain of an inspiring and elevating traditon which loses itself in the loving and gracious heart of the Supreme Lord of the Universe.





III

THE INQUIRER'S AIM & GOAL

ACCORDING to a well-known Sanskrit saying, "Not even a stupid person will set about doing anything without having some *purpose* in view." Hence, if there is to be such an activity as is implied in the fact and need of our present inquiry, its fruit (*phala*) must be stated. The Vedantist holds that there is only one Existence—the Brahman. Sankara says:—"The inquiry into the true purport of the Vakyas (sentences) of the Vedanta has for its purpose this higher bliss (*nishreyasa*)"—the Brahman, the Absolute Reality. According to the Taittiriya Upanishad, the Brahman is "*Sat*,"—the undifferentiated, the ever-existent (*nitya-siddha, nityo nityanam*), unchanging, perfect reality. How, then, can it be a result or fruit attainable by some means, instruments, or methods of operation,—a *sadhya* or *phala*? If, indeed, it can be secured as

such fruit and consequence of human activity, it must cease to be what it claims to be—"*Sat*" or *siddha-vastu*. Is it not also a fact that we *desire* one thing after another, and then proceed to supply some corresponding want, and gain happiness of one kind or another thereby ? But that is because the supreme, ever-present, Brahman (or *Bhuma*) has become limited by association with what is *alpa* (limited)—the ever-changing, unenduring, objects, belonging to the material world,—and hence both the desire for happiness and its fulfilment are transient and changing. The Upanishad says :—"There is no happiness in what is limited" (*alpa*) and therefore is without permanence. The Upanishadic terms *Bhuma*, *Brahman* mean *that which is big, unlimited*,—that which is perfect, the supremest of all. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* calls Brahman not only *Sat*, but also *Chit* (Knowledge Absolute) and *Ananda* (Bliss Absolute). Clearly it is as Chit that the Brahman becomes *recognised* as limited with the objects of external world. It is also clear that it is by being freed from such association and of the taint ensuing thereby that the Brahman is *realised* in its true nature (*Svarupa*) as absolute and perfect Bliss (*Ananda*). It is with such a supreme realisa-

tion (or Experience) as the purpose in view that we pursue our quest (*vichara*) after the true purport of the sentences of the Upanishads.

Even at this starting-point of our journey, we have to meet a preliminary objection,—*viz.*, How can the Brahman, described or conceived of as above, be the result (*phala*) attainable (*sadhya*) by such a process of inquiry as we are going to pursue? Are we not *thereby*—*i.e.*, by making it the goal of our inquiry—making it subject to a limitation which is foreign to its nature? On this point we can at this stage give only an unsatisfactory reply. A full and convincing answer will come on when we reach the difficult topic of *Akhandartha-Vada.* The perfect bliss (Brahman) can never be the result (*phala*) of a *particular knowledge* of any exterior object or phenomenon which owes its existence—and the transient experience we have of it—to its temporary association with—and the witness of—the Self. Now, let us take an instance,—an object before us seen as a stationary pillar when first perceived from a distance, and later, when we approach near it, as a person standing where we saw the pillar before. Both are clearly instances of the

direct perception—aparokṣha-jnana—of external objects resulting (*janya*) from something like a process of reasoning. In the case of our first *false* impression of a pillar, we imagine we observe some of the signs or features of a pillar and thence infer from them that the object is—or must be—a pillar. Subsequently, we actually see the signs and features of a living human being and thence conclusively know it to be such. But, in the case of the Atman, it is neither an object actually perceived outside, as in the latter case,—nor is it one *supposed* to be so perceived, as in the vision of the pillar for which it was first mistaken. The Atman is the ever-present —*nitya*, not *janya*—absolute Experience; and so it can never appear or become like an object of the external world whose perception (or even existence) is only due to the *witness*, purely hypothetical or assumed, of the former. No such witness can exist —or needs to be assumed—in the case of the Atman. It is the one Existence (*sat*), the one Experience,—and there is no other such. Every other existence or experience is an effected (*janya*) one, and therefore limited (*parichchinna*) by time, place, etc., and has its origin in a false superposition of a material object having name and form on

the one Absolute Existence or Self which has thereby to *become a witness* of the same—*i. e.*, of the object which has secured the privilege of coming within its scope and range of experience.

All effected and limited sense-enjoyments of others are to us, while they last, part and parcel of the external world and cannot, through the mere channel of oral communication, become part of the material of our sense-experience. If they do become the latter, they cease to belong to the outer world of sense, but are, while they last for us, part and parcel of what constitutes our inner and living self. At other times they *seem*, no doubt, external *to us, only because they have no longer an independent* existence or manifestation apart from that association with the Atman in which they had become manifested for us. Further, it is an error to hold that, because there is a difference in the source of experience, the object experienced should be also different. For, whether the source of manifestation is lamplight or sunlight, the object remains the same in form, colour, *etc.* The case is similar in regard to our true knowledge (*Prana*), whether of the external world or of the inner self. Hence the

Self-Existence—*alias* the *immediate, absolute, Experience*—revealed by the Guru's teaching of the Maha-Vakyas of the Upanishads can never be like the external and phenomenal experience *meditated by the senses and mind of man.* It can never, therefore, be a *sadhya-phala*,—a result attainable through the agency and mediacy, the causative instrumentality, of any object, internal or external, belonging to the changing material world. If it is sometimes (or often) *spoken* of as such, it is only in a secondary or figurative (*gauna* or *aupacharika*) sense, but not in the primary significance of the word.

Further, we may look at this question from another point of view. According to Sankara, one of the four fundamental qualifications of the inquirer (*adhikari*) into the Atman is his intense *desire* for release from the bondage of *samsara*,—"*Mumukshutva*". The knowledge of Brahman cannot spring from a mere desire for it,—but only from the appropriate *Pramana* (or instrument of knowledge). The (Upanishad) Vakyas or sentences into whose purport we are making an inquiry (*vichara*) come in here as the proper instrument of knowledge.

When this knowledge comes on, it frees us from our ignorance (of Brahman) which is the source of the misery of embodied existence. This freedom is known as Mukti. It (Mukti) alone is the *real result* (*phala*) sought for, and attainable by the *adhikari* the inquirer possessing the desire for liberation which is one of his four essential and requisite preliminary qualifications. *Then, too, as previously*, the Illumination, Experience, or Bliss, known as the one Self (or Brahman), is living and existent (*siddha*). Ignorance, and all the impediments to knowledge—whether the relative knowledge relating to phenomena in the universe, or the absolute Brahman which is one Reality—originating in ignorance have vanished. Hence the Brahman is not to be *conceived* of as the possible fruit, immediate or remote, of our inquiry, and cannot be *gained* as such result,— for, as already frequently stated, it is *nitya-siddha*, ever-present; and, therefore, no such mental effort and activity as is implied in our inquiry is needed to gain it. A result (*phala*) implies a means or instrument,—and so we are landed in Pluralism. But there is only one Existence (or Experience)—and no second. Hence the Brahman is not the result (*phala*) of our *vichara*.

It is often indeed so spoken of, but only so by courtesy (*upachara*)—*i. e.*, in a secondary, not the primary, sense of the word.

Cannot the Brahman, then, being what it is—*viz.*, Joy absolute, *Ananda-svarupa*—be regarded as the object of the *desire for liberation* (*mumuksha*) which is accepted as one of the four indispensable preliminary qualifications of the Inquirer into Brahman? Let us first state definitely what is *Mukti*. It is the destruction of the primordial matter (*prakriti*, *Maya*, *ajnana*, *avyakta*, all of which are synonymous terms, as Sankara frequently explains) which is the positive root-cause (*bhavarupa mula-karana*) of the manifested universe of material objects. That process of destruction arises from the immediately previous final mental modification (*Charama-manovritti*) which rises into manifestation as a result of the teaching of the Vakyas (sentences) of the Vedanta, but unfailingly also disappears itself in bringing about that process;—and then the sun of the Atman is no longer clouded by the cloud of matter, but shines in all its own everlasting (*nitya-siddha*) glory of self-effulgence (*svayam prakasa*). The usual illustration given in this,

connection is the dust of the clearing-nut (*kathaka-renu)*, which, when cast into a vessel of muddy water, goes down to the bottom taking with it also the mud in the water. The Vedanta holds that the destruction of the bondage of *samsara* (arising from the *charama-mano-vritti* already spoken of) can become the object of desire,—the *mumuksha* (or desire for liberation) which is included as one of the four qualifications essential to the Inquirer after Brahman. The Nyaya and Vaisheshika systems of philosophy hold that this negative process of destruction (*dhvamsa*) of the pains and penalties of material existence alone constitutes *mukti*, and there is no positive joy of the spiritual kind transcending it.

The one great rival of the Doctrine of Experience as the One Self in the India of the past has been that held by the Mimamsakas—*viz.*, that the soul of man is an indispensable part and ancillary (*anga*, or *sesha*) of all Vedic *karmas* (rituals) and that the knowledge gained by the study of, and inquiry into, the purport of the sentences of the Veda is meant only to enable the householder to duly perform those rituals. Mukti, according to

the Mimamsakas, is only at best a particular kind of satisfaction (*sukha-visesha*) resulting from the rituals,—and even this is only an assumption. For, where any results in the shape of enjoyments here or in higher worlds are stated in the Vedas, the aim is only to extol the value and need of the rituals and persuade men to engage themselves ardently in their due performance. The same is also the purport of the passages of the Upanishads where the soul's real nature (*svarupa*) is described as pure and perfect, everlasting bliss and so on. The inquiry into the Self is needed and prescribed,—but its object is only to convince the inquirer that the aim of the Vedas is only to establish the doctrine of ritualism,—to convince every human being that he is an intelligent person over and above his physical organism so as to create in him an interest in the proper performance of all Vedic sacrifices and other rituals. In the technical language of later days, the aim of Vedic inquiry is *Kratvartha* (to promote the performance of rituals), and not—*purushartha*, to secure a future state of enjoyment in a world beyond this or to secure the grace of a supreme God in his own world and perfect bliss beyond the sphere of matter. This is

why it is pointed out (*vide* Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, III. 1) that even men like King Janaka who had the knowledge of Brahman. "performed Yajna, making many gifts." If mere knowledge of the Self is the aim of the inquiry, why should they perform Karmas involving enormous exertion and responsibilities of diverse kinds? Further, there are even found passages in the Upanishads themselves (Chandogya, I. I 10; Brihadaranyaka, IV. 4, 2) which expressly state that knowledge (of the Self) has no independent value and must be combined with Karma in order to secure or enhance such value,—and so it is only an auxiliary (*sahakari*) of Karma. There are also passages which expressly declare that a full knowledge of the real purport of the Vedas is specially needed for the due performance of the householder's daily duties (*nitya-karmas*).

Sankaracharya, after elaborating as above the special pleading of the Mimamsakas, takes similar pains to demolish it. In the *first* place, the Upanishads are simply content with *extolling* Karmas so as to induce ritualistic activity. Or, in the *second* place, the Karmas mentioned have another intent and bearing (*anyatha-siddha*), as relating to *loka-*

sangraha (*vide Bhagavad-Gita*)—the welfare of all humanity as a whole by the abandoning of all activities which proceed from purely egoistic motives, and so not producing a binding effect on the doer. Sankara offers many other arguments, and entirely overthrows the Mimamsaka view (*Vide Purushartha-adhikarana*, Chap. III, Pada 4 of the Brahama Sutras of Vyasa). The same topic is also dealt with at great length by Sankara in his Bhashya on (I. 1–4). We do not here need to enlarge further on this topic. Sankara similarly overthrows (I. 1–4) also the view that the Vedanta prescribes *pratipatti upasana*, or *bhakti*—(all these being synonymous terms)—of the supreme personal Deity.

Vyasa would not have begun his Brahma-Sutras as altogether a separate treatise and system of doctrine (*darsana*) from the Karma (or Purva) Mimamsa, had he not felt that it required a different *adhikari* (person qualified) for fully profiting by it. Hence, also, Sankara maintains that the qualification for realising the absolute Experience which is the one Self is altogether diffrent from the mere performance of Vedic rituals or even of the worship of the supreme Deity who creates and sustains the

universe. Sankara points out that "the innermost self—the light of which destroys the (beginningless) ignorance together with the binding *Karma-vasanas* hidden in the mind, and which is no longer the incarnating jiva, but the pure absolute Brahman—can no longer be transformed so as to prove merely an indispensable adjunct and limb of Vedic rituals."* The Vedanta aims at teaching that the soul of man is, indeed, not merely the living and intelligent doer (*Karta*) and *bhokta* (enjoyer) different from his body which, without his presence, is only a mass of inert matter, but that it is to be known (*vedya*) in its true nature as *asamsari*, one not roving about in birth after birth in the world of phenomena, but the one innermost Self which is all Experience and Bliss, pure and absolute. Such a realisation of the one supreme Entity can never lead to activity,—for it transcends the entire phenomenal universe (of activity). Several Upanishadic passages contain *indications* (*darsanas—i. e., lingas— vide* Brahma-Sutras, III, 4-8 and 9) showing that those who have realised the absolute Experienee as the one Self are free from all Karmas. If there are also passages seemingly contradictory, a careful inquiry into their purport will unfailingly show either that they refer

to the *sopadhika* (conditioned) Brahman, or to some *karma* or *upasana* taught in the Vedas. In this connection Sankara especially refers to the passage in the Kenopanishad (I. 4) which denies over and over again that Brahman is the object of the act of *upasana*. He also refers to Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad (II. 4, 13) which denies that it is the object of the mere mental activity of knowing. The Brahman than in its truth and essence, is the innermost Self, Experience, Knowledge, or Consciousness,—the one pure and absolute Existence.





V

THE PROBLEM OF METHOD IN THE VEDANTA.

THE subject-matter of philosophy in the West has usually been either the familiar phenomena of experience in the world, external or internal, or both. Sometimes, however, an attempt is made to distinguish the coarse perceptions and experiences of common sense, from these same as sitfed, corrected, and made precise and presented to us as such by an intelligent person trained in scientific methods. In either case, logical method is brought into use so as to bring either or both sets of phenomena under some one comprehensive law or principle of explanation.

Of such principles or methods we have several leading instances.

I. *The Empirical or Common* sense *Method.* According to this principle or method, the facts of

experience are of two kinds,—either objects existing and perceived outside the mind or thoughts, *i.e.*, ideas—produced, within the mind, and conceived as such, and not states inhering in the mind as primary data. The great difficulty of this theory with a certain class of thinkers is that often the perceptions are erroneous and at times do not at all correspond with objects as they actually are outside. Hence the origin of Idealism, which denies altogether the existence of the outside world—Sankara holds neither the traditional dualistic realism, nor the representationism of Descartes according to which the mind either receives, like a photographic plate, representations of objects existing outside and thereby is enabled to perceive or know those objects as they are,—or receives from the objects such an influence as enables its own latent and innate dispositions or tendencies to project themselves outside so as to ascertain and determine the characteristics of those objects in whole or in part. Nor does Sankara turn, by any kind of enforced and inexorable reaction, to the extravagances of the Buddhist schools of idealism. He is a realist of the modern "critical" type. The mind's thoughts are dependent upon— in fact they are copies or configurations more

or less complete, of the objects which exist outside independently of our knowing them and are not in any wise conditioned by their being known to us. Further, according to Sankara, knowledge is only a *particular* (or special) kind of relation existing between the object and its configuration, image or idea, in the mind. He says also :—"Till Brahman is realised, we agree that all objects (whether external or internal) are *real*,"—real in the sense that they exist apart from our knowledge of them or the aspects in which they are known. Otherwise men will not be differently affected by the same objects. Indeed, the data of perception are largely dependent upon the store of impressions (*vasanas*) produced and remaining hidden in the mind during the past life (and lives) of each person as symbolic, but also, active agencies which enable us to receive stimulation from objects outside and express ourselves in responsive perceptions of them. At the same time, Sankara holds that, in the very act of receiving a stimulation from outside, there is produced in the mind a sense of the actual existence of the outer reality. We may often err, but our erroneous perceptions may always be accounted for later on, and corrected in time.

II. *The Method of Intuition.* According to this method, the mind has, by nature certain individual and internal tendencies or dispositions which are the essential preliminary in all knowledge—dispositions which must be carefully cultivated (or eschewed) in order that we may not become the slaves of the environment; and the external reality comes next as the object in knowledge. But in truth there is no such method in use known as Intuition by which we are enabled to sense these tendencies (*Vasanas*) in the individual. The tendencies are directly unknown except to the superconscious vision of the Yogi; and their existence is only inferrible from our direct knowledge of an individual's aims and activities in life. The Upanishads mention them as facts, and so we cannot properly hold them to be mere products of a theorist's imagination, or merely to be hypotheses invented to account for the manner in which men's experiences of the outer world and their activities in life get limited and restrained in the practice of daily life. Finally, not all our mental dispositions can be discovered by any processes of intuition or inference available to us,—and they remain or may remain, entirely hidden during our entire allotted span of life here.

A new form of the Mehtod of Intuition has been recently promulgated by Bergson and become famous and influential all over the world. According to him we know a thing in two different ways:— "The first implies that we move round an object; the second that we enter into it." "The first kind of knowledge may be said to stop at the *relative*; the second, in those cases where it is possible, to attain the *absolute*." In the latter case, Bergson holds that our experience is not relative to any points of view or reference which we take up in regard to the object, or to any symbols by which it is translated or transformed and made to form part of our knowledge. As Bergson says, "I am inside *the object itself.*" *I no longer grasp the object* "from without, remaining where I am, but where it is, from within, as it is in itself. I shall possess an absolute." "The absolute, which is the object, and not its representation, the original and not its translation, is perfect by being perfectly what it is." Bergson, also, ventures to say that "it is doubtless that the absolute has often been identified with the infinite." Then he goes on to say:—"It follows from this that an absoltue could only be given in an *Intuition*, whilst everything falls within the province

of *analysis.* By *intuition* is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places himself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible. Analysis, on the contrary, is the operation which reduces the object to elements already known, that is to elements common both to it and other objects...In its eternally unsatisfied desire to embrace the object around which it is compelled to turn, analysis multiplies without end the number of its points of view in order to complete its always incomplete representation, and ceaselessly varies its symbols that it may perfect the always incomplete translation. But intuition, if intuition is possible, is a simple act." According to Bergson, Intuition is the method of metaphysics and enables us "to possess a reality absolutely instead of knowing it relatively,"—and so "metaphysics is the science which claims to dispense with symbols." Finally, "there is one reality, at least, which we all seize from within, by intuition and not by simple analysis. It is our own personality in its flowing through time—our self which endures." Metaphysics transcends all fleeting and relative symbols, aspects, concepts, images, in order to reach the intuition which enables consciousness

"to appear to itself as it really is, without any veil" *i.e.*, "to have a faithful image of the development of ourself in duration."—This so-called new method is nothing but a description of the process by which the Buddhist holds that we become aware of our consciousness as a complex whole of mental states or conditions—a whole forming a moving line or flux which while it cannot remain the same for any two successive moments presents at every *second* moment the memory of what it has inherited from its predecessor, and so, notwithstanding the continuous flux and ceaseless change which constitutes its duration leaves behind it the sense of personality,—of "our self which endures" (Bergson), of what the Buddhist calls "*alayavijnana*", the store (or centre) of consciousness. All this teaching of Bergson regarding the method or process of Intuition is nothing more than the Buddhist philosophy known as *kshanika vada* or theory of continuous change. But why should it be be called Intuition, or regarded as giving us a knowledge of a *metaphysical absolute*, as distinguished from a relative and enduring self, an ever-changing centre or store of conscious states happening in duration or time—of successive and differing concepts, ideas, or mental conditions arising

out of a multiplicity of purely external points of view or aspects of objects outside, being taken into consideration? In our view, Bergson's philosophy is not different from the method of Pragmatism, to which we next proceed. The *truly absolute* has always been understood in the sense of a *noumenal and static reality* independent of all changes and advances made in the sphere of the phenomenal world of time and space.

III. *The Method of Pragmatism.* This method has of late gained a wide acceptance in the West, chiefly owing to the spread of several of the leading conceptions of Buddhism in the West, though its leading representatives claim that its main features and tendencies originated chiefly in America. Its central conception—and no one can be blind to its truth—is that no theory or conception of reality can have meaning or value for the world except through the experiences of living and sentient beings inhabiting the world of phenomena—experiences which are the consequences of activities in some locality or habitation in it. But how can we, with our limited understandings, know all these consequences or be able to interpret them in their true

bearings? *Secondly*, there are experiences which at first seem real, but fail us later on, though such visions or appearances do not fail to bring their own consequences with them. *Thirdly*, no pragmatist,—according to the late Professor James, till lately the leading exponent of Pragmatism—can warrant the "objective truth" of any phenomenon taking place in the universe. He says:—"The Pragmatist, whenever he says reality, means in the first sense what he *believes* at the moment to be such...Each reality verifies and validates its own *idea* exclusively." Thus the Pragmatist stands self-condemned. Sankara is the very antipodex of the Pragmatist, and proclaims the *objective*—though not the *absolute*—truth of our experiences in the world of phenomena. *Finally*, the Pragmatist holds that "reality is ever in the making," and so nothing remains unchanged even for two successive seconds. In fact nothing ever exists,—a position manifestly absurd. For, as Sankara says, we have "the knowledge that this thing is the same as that seen before,"—what he calls *tad-idam-buddhi*. He goes on to say that "in the case of such knowledge, it is not reasonable to hold that they refer to different objects". Nor is it right, as Sankara says in the same context, to

account for such knowledge of *sameness* by mere *similarity* (sadrisya). For, "where there are not *different* objects, it is not reasonable to assert the knowledge of *similarity*." *Vide* Bhashya on Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

IV. *The Theory of Phenomenal Idealism.* The Idealist, whether of the Buddhist or the Berkeleyan type seeks the source of reality in the mind and finds it there in the "*idea*." The world without is to him either a fiction or a mere projection of its contents by the mind into an imaginary outer world whirling about in an imaginary space beyond. We do not propose to criticise this method at length at this stage. We shall only point out that the self-conscious ego knows himself, and can know himself, only as contrasted with the outer world of practical life. As Lord Balfour remarks.—"Each is necessary to the other; in the absence of the other neither has any significance." To the Vedantin, *prakriti* (primordial matter) is *anadi* (beginningless) quite as much as the living self-conscious personality or thinker (*jiva*). Hence, neither matter nor the living personality can be made to account for the other.

Another school of Idealism has recently appear-

ed in Italy. Though founded on Hegelianism, it has undergone a transformation. This new school of philosophy as promulgated by Benedetto Croce and his followers is now gaining some prominence in Europe. Hegel held that, while we must interpret the whole of reality in terms of thought, "behind the immediate thought or experience of which we are aware, transcending it and yet immanent in it, there is a total concrete unity of thought in terms of which alone individual experience becomes intelligible and through participation in which it is real." In Great Britain, there arose a new school which combined the Hegelian with the Vedantic point of view and of which Bradley and Bosanquet form the leading representatives. They hold that there is an inmutable and absolute reality —which is at the same time a totality of thought— creative of, and constituting, the completed universe, a universe which is all that is and never more than that all, but at the same time ever new in its constant and continuous manifestation of itself in the finite world of phenomena. The new Italian school founded by Croce criticises the "reality" of the modern English school of Idealists as a static absolute—*first*, on the ground that it cannot pro-

account for such knowledge of *sameness* by mere *similarity* (sadrisya). For, "where there are not *different* objects, it is not reasonable to assert the knowledge of *similarity*." (*Vide* Bhashya on Brihadaranyaka Upanishad).

IV. *The Theory of Phenomenal Idealism.* The Idealist, whether of the Buddhist or the Berkeleyan type seeks the source of reality in the mind and finds it there in the "*idea.*" The world without is to him either a fiction or a mere projection of its contents by the mind into an imaginary outer world whirling about in an imaginary space beyond. We do not propose to criticise this method at length at this stage. We shall only point out that the self-conscious ego knows himself, and can know himself, only as contrasted with the outer world of practical life. As Lord Balfour remarks :—"Each is necessary to the other ; in the absence of the other neither has any significance." To the Vedantin, *prakriti* (primordial matter) is *anadi* (beginningless) quite as much as the living self-conscious personality or thinker (*jiva*). Hence, neither matter nor the living personality can be made to account for the other.

Another school of Idealism has recently appear-

ed in Italy. Though founded on Hegelianism, it has undergone a transformation. This new school of philosophy as promulgated by Benedetto Croce and his followers is now gaining some prominence in Europe. Hegel held that, while we must interpret the whole of reality in terms of thought, "behind the immediate thought or experience of which we are aware, transcending it and yet immanent in it, there is a total concrete unity of thought in terms of which alone individual experience becomes intelligible and through participation in which it is real." In Great Britain, there arose a new school which combined the Hegelian with the Vedantic point of view and of which Bradley and Bosanquet form the leading representatives. They hold that there is an inmutable and absolute reality —which is at the same time a totality of thought— creative of, and constituting, the completed universe, a universe which is all that is and never more than that all, but at the same time ever new in its constant and continuous manifestation of itself in the finite world of phenomena. The new Italian school founded by Croce criticises the "reality" of the modern English school of Idealists as a static absolute—*first*, on the ground that it cannot pro-

gress in time. *Secondly*, thought is an activity, and therefore implies change and development and cannot therefore be also an absolute unity such as the new English school conceives the reality behind the manifested universe to be. Hence, according to the Italian school, reality is an *activity of thought which is self-creative and self-interpretative* and which, while it is an immediate realisation or experience, is also changing and multiplex. As a recent writer of this school, Signor Leone Vivante, says: "Each act, each thought, gathers up within itself everything of value in every time and place so as to present itself as a focus transient in duration, but in infinite relation to the living experience of the individual and without any limiting relation to any real or permanent entity," whether God, Cause or the Absolute, which are all at best illusions of the fancy, "a pure imagining" as compared with the new conception of Reality as "an activity of thought in actuation." Reality is thus conceived as a perpetual course or stream of actively changing and advancing thought, never losing what has been truly gained, but never attaining to the status of a unity or complete whole,—ever *progressing*, however, towards a solution or a fulfilment, though never reached, of

whatever is received as *ideally* true and good. This new Italian Idealism, it will be seen, is not in practice very different from the method of Pragmatism, though it sails under a different banner.

We shall now finally consider the significance of Method in the Vedanta. We have already explained (*vide* Introductory, I) how the Veda *alone* is the source of the doctrine of Experience as the One Self, and—by implication as well as by our actual study of it—of the true doctrine concerning all connected topics. This fact, when understood in its true significance, established for us, as a necessary conclusion, that Isvara, from whom the Veda springs along with the rest of the universe at the time of creation, is (and must be) omniscient (*sarvajna*). For, he is the Intelligence, Witness, (*Chaitanya or Sakshi*) which makes all the objects of the phenomenal universe shine for us. He is, indeed, neither a merely efficient cause (*nimitta-karana*), like a potter of the pottery to which he gives form, nor merely the material cause (*upadana-karana*), like the clay in the potter's hands. Whenever we speak of Isvara as being actuated by desire (*iccha*) as the *hetu* (impelling or motive force) when he

creates (*i.e.*, evolves or manifests) the world out of the primordial matter ; the intention here is only to offer an analogy which would carry a conviction of some kind to begin with to ordinary persons who do not possess the insight or intelligent comprehension which will enable them at once to catch or reach the sublime conception of the Vedanta. In truth, only the Jiva's Karmic Vasanas latent in the mind make the inactive *maya* rise into activity (*vijrimbhana*) at the time of creation. Maya is the potency (*sakti*) which according to the Veda, is to be *conceived* or understood (*kalpita*) as the seed of the universe,—a potency which is superposed on the Atman and brought into activity so that the universe may rise into manifestation and have its progressive evolution in space and time. The noumenal and undifferenced Atman, being "one only without a second," cannot be said to *have* any *saktis* or potencies which are calculated to bring it into relations of any kind with any other form of existence. Such a *sakti* is ascribed to, or superposed upon, the Atman,—and so the Atman *conceived* as possessing it,—even as the mother-of-pearl is conceived to have in it the power, potency or quality needed to appear as silver to people who see it as

such from a distance. Similarly, Brahman is to be *conceived* as having inherent in itself the potency (of maya) needed for the emanation or evolution of the universe,—and it is the seed also of his *knowledge* of the entire course of the universe, irrespective of time and place. Thus Isvara's Omniscience (*Sarvajnatvam*) means also what is known as *Sarvarthaprakasakatvam*,—the power of manifesting the entire universe of phenomena (including the Vedas) through his power of intelligent self-effulgence and self-expression. It does not mean either that, like human authors, he composed the Vedas after gaining a knowledge of all objects in the universe, nor that he recited all the Vedas, like a modern or mediaeval Mahopadhyaya (great teacher) to his disciples. But we cannot pursue this topic here into all its details.

As the Vedas thus form the source of all our knowledge of the entire universe of phenomena past present and future—the Vedas being infinite in number and therefore not confined to those now extant—and as they are also the source of our knowledge of Brahman (as already shown), we have no need to prove the truth of any of its

declarations by any of the ordinary methods or standards of proof employed by worldly men. What, then, is our method for establishing the Vedic doctrine of Experience as the One Self? Our method is ordinarily known as *Samanvaya* *i.e.*, synthesis. We only try to arrive at a logical synthesis of the words and sentences of the Upanishads of the Vedas so as to establish or construct a consistent system of doctrine which is their *true purport* (*Tatparya*). Such a synthesis can be arrived at by a rational consideration, with a constructive aim and purpose of the six indications (*lingas*) which are needed for the interpretation of any passage or context of the Veda and are usually available and discoverable. These six *tatparya-lingas* (indications of the true import of a context) are usually enumerated as follows :—(1) *Upakrama* (introductory statement); (2) *Upasamhara* (concluding statement); (3) *Abhyasa* (repetition, frequent mention); (4) *Upapatti* (the offering of a rational explanation or convincing analogy). (5) *Apurvata* (novelty,—*i.e.*, a view not expressed elsewhere and so known here for the first time); (6) *Phala* (a result, utility or value); All these or most of these, *can be found* in every Upanishad as a

whole, or even any part of the same dealing with any important topic of the Vedanta doctrine. Writers on the Vedanta and teachers of each system of doctrine have, when challenged, often had to put them forth clearly and at length in order to carry conviction to those who have an open mind and especially to the disciples resorting to them for instruction and enlightenment. It is easy to give examples. Let us, as an illustration, take the famous 6th Adhyaya of the Chhandogya-Upanishad. We shall give the *six* lingas in the order above given :—

(1) "This Sat only, friend, existed before creation." II-1 (*Upakrama*); (2) "All this (universe) is a transformation of this Self. That is reality, that is the Self, that thou art". VIII-7 (*Upasamhara*); (3) "Tat-tvam-asi" is repeated nine times—(*Abhyasa*); (4) *Upapatti*—Arguments and analogies abound everywhere in the Upanishads and sustain every part of the Vedanta Dectrine of Experience as the One Self; (5) The one reality,—*viz.*, the Atman—cannot be known from any source of knowledge (*Pramana*) except one of the Upanishads—and especially the Maha-Vakyas—(*Apurvata*); (6) *Phala*—What this consists in, and what it is not, has been explained in the previous section (No.

III.)—"The knower of the Atman passes beyond grief." (Chhandogya Upanishad, VII 1, 3). This shows that the goal of our enquiry is nothing which can be gained by an effort of ours in the world of phenomena,—*i.e.*, not a *sadhya*—but the ever-existing (*siddha*) noumenal Reality in the sense already frequently referred to *viz.*, the "One only without a second" (*ekam-eva-advitiyam*). Thus we see the logical synthesis (*Samanvaya*) of the passages forming an Upanishad is alone our method of establishing the Vedantic doctrine of Experience as the One Self, or even of any portion thereof as contained in any particular passage or context of an Upanishad.





V

THE BRAHMAN—

Its Distinctive Property (or Definition)

THERE is a saying among Indian thinkers that an object is known through its Pramana and Lakshana—*i. e.*, through the source whence we derive our knowledge of it and through the defining of it by its characteristic property (*asadharana-lakshana*). We have already frequently pointed out that the Upanishads (of the Vedas) form the *Pramana*, the source of our knowledge of Brahman. The Maha-Vakyas, too, are, still more specially, the source of that knowledge as noumenal Experience (the one Innermost Reality without a second), The sentence—*Tat-tvam-asi*—is especially famous as the *Upadesa-Vakya*,—the sentence by which the Guru conveys the final teaching regarding Brahman to the qualified disciple who desires liber-

ation from the trials and wanderings of life in the phenomenal universe. This sentence means, "That art Thou." It is obvious that the import of a sentence can be known only when the exact meaning of the words forming its component parts are known. The word "That" denotes Brahman, and we have first to define it,—to state its *lakshana* or characteristic property. Only when its definition has been clearly set forth and grasped can we easily comprehend the details of the synthesis by which we determine the exact nature of the various points constituting the Upanishadic doctrine of reality.

It is a truism that every object is defined by its characteristic or differentiating property—by that feature of it which appertains to it alone, and to no other thing or person. Now, the Taittiriya-Upanishad defines Brahman in two ways so as to satisfy this requirement. One is contained in the Second (or Brahma) Valli and is usually styled its *Svarupa-lakshana* (essential nature or aspect),—*viz.*, "*Satyam-Jnanam-Anantam*" (Existence—Knowledge—Bliss). Each of these three is implied by the two others, and so one and all denote or refer to the same object. *Satyam* is pure Exis-

tence,—untainted by any conditioning adjuncts in time or place in the universe of phenomena. *Jnanam* is that which illuminates all other objects while it remains self-illuminating and incapable of being lighted up by any other. *Anantam* means that which is free from both beginning and end, and is beyond time, place, and causation. The other definition is given in the third (or Bhrigu) Valli, and is as follows :—"That from which these beings are born,—by which, when born, they live, —into which they enter at their death." (III. 1) The sentence finally determining the sense of this passage is given in III. 6,—"From bliss these beings are born; by bliss, when born, they live; into bliss they enter at their death," This definition is known, in the technical language of the Vedanta, as *tatastha-Lakshana*, a property which is occasional and precarious (*kadachitka*). That is, it is a property which, though a distinctive and characterising attribute of Brahman, has no unconditional and invariable relationship with it, but only a relation which is accidental and uncertain,—as, for example, a crown in the case of a king,— and so cannot be said to be of the essence of Brahman.

The word *tatastha* only means "an object situated on the bank" (of a river or tank hard by). A person who wishes to quench his thirst asks a bystander where water is to be had. The latter mentions to him a tree standing on the bank of a river (or tank) hard by. Though this tree does not define what is sought for by any of its distinctive properties, it is enough to indicate it and lead the inquirer to it, though it is a fact or feature only temporarily associated with it.

Vedantic writers point out that, in a definition, there should be neither a contradiction (*virodha*), nor that which is unknown and unheard-of (*aprasiddha*). In the first place, the definition of Brahman as the active agent and cause of the creation, *etc.*, of the world contradicts its essential nature as *nirvisesha*,—free from all limiting conditions or attributes. Nowhere have we seen a thing which is eternal, possessing as its distinctive feature (or attribute) some thing, or quality which is the transient effect of a "purely external or internal activity. But that which is permanent may be a *cause* of what is ephemeral. Further, whatever is an active agent must itself be an effect (*kritaka*), and therefore

impermanent (*anitya*), and so cannot be of the *essence of Brahman*. For the Upanishad has defined it as *Satyam*, permanent Being. Similarly, if *Jnanam* and *Anantam* are its properties, Brahman cannot be *nirvisesha*, free from limiting conditions. In the *second* place, we have never heard or known of any object which is *nirvisesha*, without some qualifying property. Hence, the Vedantic conception of Brahman is open to the objection of being *aprasiddha*. In the *third* place, if it is true (as some contend) that *Satyam*, *etc.*, are of the essence of Brahman, then we ask, how can an object be its own essence ? We find everywhere that only the properties (*dharmas*) of an object help us in distinguishing it from others. and so these must form its essence.

The above objections can be easily seen to be baseless, if the following considerations are borne in mind. An object has to be viewed in two aspects, *primarily* as *vachya* (spoken of as possessing an attribute or relation); and *secondarily*, as *lakshya* (as only pointed and referred to, or indicated, by a *sign*). In this latter case, the sign has no other function (or significance) than to indicate the object

and cannot be regarded as having any *relation* to it, either essential or accidental. This is exactly what has to be borne in mind in regard to *Satya, etc.*, as the definition (*lakshana*) of Brahman. Writers on Vedanta mention an analogy in order to make the matter clear. When the moon is defined as a surpassingly luminous object, the aim *for the time being* is neither to define it so as to make us aware of its luminosity, nor its relation to other sources of light in the sky, but only to point to us the object in the sky called the moon. The objection on the ground that it is contradictory to speak of the Brahman as *both* conditioned (*savisesha*) on the ground of its being the cause of creation, *etc.*, and also unconditioned (*nirvisesha*) in its essential nature (*svarupa*) is untenable not only on the ground already stated, but also on the ground that a sentence must be understood according to its true (or intended) purport in the context,—*i. e.*, *tatparya*—, not according to what *seems* to be its meaning at first sight or what we wish to assign to it in order to advance any purpose of our own. *Satyam* etc., are mentioned by the Sruti only in order to signify that Brahman has no attributes and thereby to differentiate it from all other objects

existing in the universe or conceivable by the mind of man. Furthermore, as *each* of the words signifies the same object, there is no objection to their *collectively* signifying something different from what each denotes. That is even though *each* of the three terms denotes (or *seems* to denote) a limiting condition attaching to Brahman, there is no objection to their *collectively* signifying something different from what must distinguish the *meaning* of a word (*Padartha-upasthiti*) from the *object* which it denotes (*vyakti-visesha-upasthiti*). In the latter case, there is no reference to the relation (*samsarga*) in which the object stands to any other. In the former case, we may have a reference to such a relation, and so we may affirm that there is no contradiction between the two modes of defining adopted. We may apply this distinction here. There is no contradiction between (a) our reference to Brahman as related to the world and (b) our reference to it as being *Satya*, *etc.*, in its essential nature (*Svarupa*). The Taittiriya Upanishad in its two-fold definition of Brahman has two different aims,—*first*, to differentiate it from other objects (like *pradhana*, *kala*, *svabhava etc*,) which according to other and non-Vedic systems, are understood

as the original cause of the creation, *etc.*, of the universe; *secondly*, to remove the false identification of it with purely material and non-intelligent objects like body, mind, *etc.*, and make clear its essential nature as *Satyam etc.*,—*i.e.*, as the one absolute and innermost self-effulgence and bliss which is free from all relation to, or dependence on, any object in the phenomenal universe. The Brahman is thus taught to us as both the efficient and material cause (*abhinnanimitta-upadana karana*) of the universe, —and, hence, the universe has no existence apart from its identification with Brahman. Hence, also, the Brahman which is identified with, and conditioned by primordial matter (*mayopahita*) is the same as the eternal, unconditioned, the pure Being and Intelligence in its essence (*nitya-suddha-buddha-mukta-svabhava*). The only difference is one of *aspect* only, and there is one Existence only without a second.

That such a definition of Brahman is not open to the objection that it can be established—like the definition of an extra-ordinary source of energy or a perfected and powerful personality (*siddha-purusha*) —from any ordinary source of knowledge is shown

by Vyasa in the Sutra I 1, 3.—"*sastra-yonitvat.*" Sankara points out that this Sutra can be interpreted in two ways,—either (1) "the Sastra (Veda) is the only source from which it (Brahman) can be known" or (2) "Brahman is the source of the Sastra." In the latter sense, the Brahman in its *mayopahita* aspect —as self-conditioned by the primordial matter with which Brahman is identified in time without a beginning—is the one supreme being and personality which is competent to be the revealer of the Veda which is the repertory of all knowledge of truth and so having the omniscience needed to be the creator of this strange and complex world of infinite variety in evolution,—a world in which the near, the felt, the visible and the intangible rest mysteriously on the remote, the invisible, the intangible and unlimited Absolute, and both are identified with, and distinguishable from, each other.

Here a question is raised,—why should Brahman be accepted as the single cause of all the *three* processes in the evolution of the world, *viz.*, creation, preservation, and destruction? The answer is that, if we accept the view that there are (or may be) three distinct causes, it will contradict the statement

in the Sruti that Brahman is "one only without a second." Also, as Brahman is "one only," it must be *both* the efficient and the material cause of the world, –*abhinna-nimittopadana-karana*", as it is called. This conclusion will be contradicted, if we hold either that it is only the efficient cause and so the cause of the world's creation and preservation, or that it is only the material cause and so the object into which it is finally dissolved. Further, if Brahman is only the material cause, it will be nothing but *maya* or *prakriti*,—*i.e.*, matter in its primordial and homogenous condition, and so unintelligent. But, without intelligence, the causal principle of the world (*jagat-karana*) cannot have the three powers of knowledge, desire, and activity (*jnana-sakti, iccha-sakti,* and *kriya-sakti*) which are all needed for the world's creation, preservation, and destruction. Further, the Taittiriya-Upanishad distinctly points out that the Brahman (which is of the essential nature of *Jnanam* or Intelligence) is the direct cause of the creation of Akasa. "From this Atman, ether (*akasa*) issued" (II.1).—To the objection that there is no known example of a combination, in the same substance, of causation of both kinds, the reply is, *first*, that we rely on the

authority of the Sruti which says of the Brahman, — "It desired, let me become manifold." This passage shows that all the three powers above mentioned—*viz*, knowledge, desire, and activity (or will) —are combined in the Brahman. It is not, however, to be imagined that these three powers (*saktis*) inhere as attributes in the Brahman. They only *indicate* the Brahman by implication (*lakshana*), and do not *attach* to it as inseparable properties (*dharmas*). For, then, Brahman would become liable to change (*parinama*) and would cease to be *Satya*, permanent and changeless. If, indeed, these three properties (or functions) were *permanently* attached to Brahman, the processes of creation, preservation, and destruction would be ceaselessly going on,—an idea which is self contradictory and absurd. Besides, the world has only a phenomenal reality, but the Brahman (*Satyam*) is a transcendental and noumenal existence,—the basal support (*adhishthana*) on which the world (of matter) is falsely superposed (through a process of identification) so as to appear real,—even as silver is superposed and identified with the mother-of-pearl. Finally, the Sruti also says:—"Brahman entered into the body as this jivatma (living self)."

Hence, it is only so long as "this living self" is ignorant of his true nature as the one absolute reality "without a second," that it believes in the reality of the world.

Finally, we may very briefly refer to a discussion based on the Prasna-Upanishad (VI.2—4). The passage is as follows:—"Even here within the body is that person (*purusha*) in whom these sixteen parts (*shodasa-kalas*) have their origin. He thought within himself,—who, departing from this body, I (too) shall depart; and who, staying here, I (too) shall stay; he created breath; from breath (he created) faith, ether, air, fire, water, earth, senses, mind, food; from food (he created) strength, penance, sacred formulae (*mantras*), ritual, the worlds; in the worlds (he created) the name (*i e.*, the individual)." It is contended that the "Purusha within the body" mentioned in this passage as having created various objects including the five elements must be Hiranyagarbha—Brahma the creator,—not the Brahman or Supreme and Absolute Existence already discussed but *the first living soul* (*prathama-jivi*). We cannot here sum up the entire discussion, but shall state a few objections

against this view. *First* the passage mentioned refers to "*Prana*"—*i.e.*, Hiranyagarbha—as have been "created", and so the latter cannot be the Supreme Existence (or Brahman) who is spoken of as the originating cause of creation, *etc.*, in the Taittiriya Upanishad and in the Sutra (I. 1. 2) which gives the definition (already established) of Brahman. *Secondly*, we learn from the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad that Hiranyagarbha was subject to feelings, like fear (*bhaya*) and pain (*arati*) when he found himself alone (*ekaki*). Further, Hiranyagarbha is only the efficient cause (*nimitta-karana*) of the creation mentioned in the Prasna-Upanishad passage above quoted, while Brahman (in the Taittiriya-Upanishad and in the Brahma-Sutras of Vyasa) is *both* the efficient and the material cause of the universe. Besides, as the *jivas*, (living souls) in the universe are all eternal beings (*nityas*), they cannot have a *Nimitta-Karana* (or creating intelligence) for their own creation. Hence, the creating principle mentioned in the above passage of Prasna-Upanishad as the origin of Prana (Hiranyagarbha) *etc.*, must be only Brahman, the one Absolute Being which is both the efficient and the material cause of the phenomenal universe which owes its origin to

the false superposition of primordial matter (*maya*) on Brahman. *Thirdly*, in the Prasnopanishad itself, after teaching of the Purusha with the sixteen parts (*kalas*), *Pippalada* himself says:—"Thus far only do I know this highest Brahman *viz.*, that there is nothing higher than this" (VI. 7). Then the six inquirers after worshipping him, said to him:—"Thou art as father to us—thou who hast enabled us to cross to the other end of (the ocean) of ignorance." This shows us clearly that the passage quoted relates to the one absolute Existence beyond the phenomenal universe and not to the Hiranyagarbha, the first jiva who plays a minor part in the work of creation. Further, as the sixteen parts (*kalas*) includes the five elements, the *purusha* mentioned cannot be Hiranyagarbha, but the supreme Being (or Paramesvara). *Fourthly*, in the Brihadaranyaka passage relating to Hiranyagarbha (above referred to), Hiranyagarbha is *not* stated to have created the five elements of his own age (*Kalpa*). Further, Hiranyagarbha himself and the devas, men, *etc.*, of other Kalpas (than his own) are created by another, *viz.*, Paramesvara, the supreme Personality (of God).

We have only contented ourselves here with the putting forth of a few simple arguments, and not entered into a full discussion of all the arguments on either side, as we are yet at the commencement of our exposition of the Vedanta doctrine. The doctrine will be presented in a fuller and more reasoned form when we reach a later stage in its development.





VII

THE DEFINITION of BRAHMAN FURTHER CONSIDERED.

THE great Indian teacher, Madhusudana Sarasvati, says:—"In the second Sutra of the Brahma-Mimamsa, under the pretext of pointing out the cause of the world, the distinction between *tatastha-lakshana* (temporary attribute) and *svarupa-lakshana* (the essential property) is made in order to establish the truth that the all-pervading Brahman and the living individual (Jiva) are capable of being related to each other in their mutual relation of being distinction-less (*abheda*)." This position has already been established in the previous section. Though the property (or function) of being the cause of the world is only a temporary, though none the less distinctive, property, it is brought forward so prominently in order to show that the living individual is not in essence distinct from the absolute

Brahman which is the object of inquiry. For the aim of the inquiry, as already shown, is that alone and none other. Before the inquiry is started, there prevails a state of ignorance—and even a false or perverted knowledge—in the human mind which hides the truth and thereby brings about the misery of the bondage and degradation in which man finds himself during his wanderings in the world of phenomena. The inquiry into the truth with the aid of the Upanishads is meant to remove this state of ignorance by establishing that both the inquirer's individuality and the absolute Existence are, in essence, one and the same.

We have already stated that, according to Chap. II of the Taittiriya-Upanishad, the essential Nature (*Svarupa*) of Brahman is defined as *Satyam* (Existence), *Jnanam* (Self-Effulgence) and *Anantam* (the Bliss of Freedom from the limitations of place, time and circumstance). That this definition suits both the limited individuality of the living man as we know him and the unknown divine personality of the supreme God who creates and sustains the universe can be satisfactorily established by the following considerations (mentioned in the context

of the Taittiriya Upanishad already referred to). Existence, Self-Effulgence, and Bliss are all found in the Jiva of our experience and in God as we find him depicted in the Itihasas and Puranas—though they are *limited* in the former owing to ignorance of the truth, and *unlimited* in the latter owing to his omniscience. In the case of the former the limitation will vanish when ignorance is replaced by the acquisition of Knowledge through the inquiry (*vichara*) into the ultimate purport of the Veda. Hence, the living individual (*Jiva*) and the supreme Person (God, Isvara), are in nature and essence, one and the same (*abheda*).

To the above statement of doctrine, the *first* objection is that these three characteristics avowedly exist in different degrees in the Jiva and in God. and therefore, these two beings cannot have the identity (*abheda*) postulated in the Vedantic doctrine of Sankara. The answer is that in the case of God, the limitation is not one of essence, but only due to *Maya* or primordial matter in its totality, the root-cause of the world's manifestation; and, in the case of the *Jiva*, too, it is due to *Avidya*, which is but a fraction of the same, though varying in

quantity and quality in different individuals so as to account for the differences we discern in the manifestations of personality, everywhere. The immeasurable perfection, omnipotence, and omniscience of the Divine Personality, equally with the measurable limitations of the Jivas as individuals, are recorded and accounted for in all the authoritative sources of Hinduism, including the highest of them all,—the Veda.

The *second* objection is that the doctrine assumes that *Maya* (primordial matter) is a *second* existence, in addition to Brahman. The answer to this is that (a) *Maya is not real.* The Atman is the one reality. "*Sat* alone existed before creation, one only without a second" (Chhandogya-Upanishad). (b) Professor Eddington of Cambridge, recently declared his scientific doctrine of matter (as Maya) as follows:—"The conception of substance which played so great a part in our familiar idea of the world and in our philosophy of matter, had become greatly reduced in its domain, and, in fact, *physics had found so little scope for substance that it had abolished the conception altogether*" (*The Hindu*, Feb. 17, p. 8). Neither Newton's "solid, hard,

impenetrable, movable particles of various sizes and figures," nor the "primitive fluid" of Kelvin, nor "the simple atom or center of force" of Boscovich are now found acceptable as the true cause of the material world. As Dr. James Ward tells us:— "We must not call them fetishes, but they are assuredly fictions." As Professor Eddington now teaches us, matter as a substance stands "*abolished*." To the scientist of to-day as to the Sankarite Vedantin, matter is only phenomenal. That is, we know it only as relative to our senses and mind. We know nothing of an underlying external reality or substance called matter. The Indian dualistic philosopher of to-day to whatever school he belongs, has to abandon as unscientific his doctrine of three realities or substances (*tripadartha*). The one reality the Atman—is undifferenced ; and also, it has no potencies (or saktis) enabling it to get into relations of any kind with any other object or form of existence. Being the "one existence only without a second" the Atman has to be, and is to be *conceived* as being, the *asraya* (basis, support) of Avidya or Maya, and *also* as its *Vishaya* (the object within its reach or sphere of operation). Thus, the Atman, being of the nature of *Jnana* or *Prakasa*, is enabled

to endow avidya (or Maya) with certain powers or potencies (*Saktis*), fitted to produce the evolution of the universe. These *saktis* are two in number, *viz.*, *avarana sakti* and *vikshepa sakti*,—the latter being a direct consequence of the former. By the *Avarana sakti*, it prevents the Atman from shining and being recognised by the Jiva (individual person) as *pratyak* in its nature *i.e.*, as the *innermost* of all existences knowable by us. As a consequence of this failure in recognising the Atman truly as interior (*pratyak*) the living individual (*Jiva*) is perforce made to perceive certain appearances outside, and mistakes them for realities (even as he mistakes a mother-of-pearl for silver) and thus gains his experiences of the phenomenal universe. *Furthermore*, the power or potency in Avidya becomes actualised only when the Karmic tendencies (Vasanas) of the Jiva become ripe and manifest themselves for the gaining of fresh experiences in the manifested world of phenomena. (c) *Maya* (avidya), however, is not *asat*, *i.e.*, not a mere unreality—not a mere trick of language like the expression "the horn of a hare." For it is to be conceived as having the saktis (above mentioned) out of which the world of phenomena spring into manifestation.

Maya therefore, is the primeval (but only the proximate, not the ultimate) material cause of the phenomenal universe, and it ceases only when the noumenal reality of the Innermost Self is realised by the methods of meditation long known and practised among the Indian Yogis and Jnanis. Even as our dream-experiences are only *apparent* but thought by us to be real while they last and are recognised as false in our waking state, so the phenomenal world of our waking state seems real while it lasts, but passes away and is no longer real when the realisation of the Atman as "one only without a second" is reached.

The *third* objection against the doctrine is that *Satyam, Jnanam* and *Anantam* are themselves *attributes* of Brahman, and so the doctrine that Brahman has no attributes is baseless. To this the reply is that they are not attributes, but only serve to *indicate* that the Atman is,—to use the language of *Sankara*, "*nitya—suddha,—buddha—mukta*" in its nature and essence. *Satya* means that the one Self is not capable of being destroyed or even affected by anything in the physical world or by mind. *Jnana* means that it is essentially self-

effulgent, and not capable of being lighted up by anything else. *Ananta* means freedom from limitation in place, time or through relationship to objects in the world of phenomena, and hence it is of the essence of joy, for our experience of the world proves that limitation is productive of misery. As the Sruti says, "that which is unlimited (*bhuma*) is joy; there is no joy in what is limited (*alpa*)".

The *fourth* objection to the doctrine has been recently stated as follows in a lecture (*vide the Hindu* of February 2nd) delivered by Prof. P. N. Srinivasacharya, of Madras. We shall mention *three* points therein. (I) "To Ramanuja Vedanta was an organic basis of Knowledge. Sankara, on the other hand, was monistic in his views." (II) "Sat was the absolute, not the contentless, not the Nirgunabrahman; Sat differentiates itself in the multiple world." (III) "The Four Pramanas mutually corrected one another. If the Veda is to be accepted in its totality, why say accept this and reject that? Metaphysics, morality, and religion must be allied. "Philosophy having to do with all these, the absolute of metaphysics could not be said to be but identical with the God of morality and religion.

We shall consider these objections in order. (1) The idea that the Vedanta reveals Brahman to us as "an organic basis of knowledge" is merely founded on the analogy of man's bodily organism. The Upanishad, as already shown, asserts only that "Sat alone existed before creation—one only without a second." The distinction in Brahman between a *deha* (body) and a *dehi* (the owner of the body) implies a duality or mulitiplicity for which there is no foundation in the Upanishads. An argument from analogy is of no validity where it is opposed to the express statements of the Sruti and the traditional interpretation (or *Sampradaya*), handed down to us from the Rishis of antiquity. As Sankara says in his Gita-Bhashya :—"Even though a man knows all the various branches of Knowledge, we cannot accept him as a teacher (of Vedanta) if his views are opposed to the Sampradaya." As the late eminent philosopher, Dr. James Ward also says :—"Analogy is an important aid "to description, though powerless to prove existence". Also, an eminent writer on Rhetoric, Campbell, says :—Analogical evidence is at best but a feeble support and is ever hardly honoured with the name of proof." Further, in the present case, the analogy

of an organism is not proven, as already stated—as it has no Vedic support. Our critic's defence is that Ramanuja "upheld the equal validity of all Pramanas." Nor does Sankara fail here. For he says :—" Each Pramana has its force in establishing the truths pertaining to its own sphere of usefulness." Perhaps what the critic refers to is the Vaishnava contention that the Vedas must be understood in the light thrown by the Pancharatra-Agama and the Vishnu and other Puranas recognised as alone Sattvika. But the Rishis have laid down that "wherever there is conflict between Sruti and Smriti, Sruti is superior in validity." Jaimini, in especial, has laid down : "Wherever there is conflict, the Smriti pronouncements have no validity," and should not be accepted. Besides, Vyasa has clearly stated that the Smritis including Itihasas, Puranas, &c. are only meant as a popular exposition for the benefit of the "inferior brahmins" (*brahma-bandhus*) and others of the Kali age who are unfit to grasp the Vedic teaching as interpreted and upheld by the immemorial Monistic tradition running straight down from the first teacher who is Narayana himself. Hence, it is impossible to maintain "the *equal*

validity of all Pramanas." Hence, also, we must maintain that, when the critic says that "the Vedanta is the organic basis of knowledge," we must understand that the doctrine is only intended for those who cannot grasp, or put into practice, the higher "monistic" doctrine as taught in the Sampradaya which Sankara upholds for the world's benefit. This more acceptable and defensible view has been taught in a lecture on "The Life and Teachings of Madhvacharya" recently delivered in Bangalore (and reported in *The Hindu* of Feb. 14, 1927) by a famous scholar and Vedantin, Mr. Karpur Srinivasa Rau :—"The Uttara-Mimamsa school was represented by the Great Sankara. He taught to the world the nature of the Supreme Paramatman, the nature of the Jivatman, and the correlative relationship of the two by the famous teaching 'That Thou art.' The lecturer said that he and he alone could be an Advaitin who has realised the Brahman in all objects and in himself. The highest conception was found to be incomprehensible to the later generations of men, and hence the advent of Sri Ramanuja who preached that the Parabrahman was to be contemplated and adored through his personal qualifications, etc."—(11). The

critic entirely misunderstands the philosophical meaning of the word, '*Absolute*' The word does not mean "contentless," as the critic thinks. Let us refer even to such a common source of information as Chambers' Twentieth Century Dictionary. It says :—"*(phil.)* Existing in and by itself without necessary relation to any other being ; capable of being conceived of as unconditioned. In the sense of being finished, perfect, it may be considered as opposed to the Infinite ; but in the sense of freed from restriction or condition, it is evident that the Infinite itself must be absolute. Opposite schools differ on the question whether the absolute can be known under conditions of consciousness." Accord• to Sankara,—who bases himself on the Brahma-Valli of the Taitiriya-Upanishad—the essential nature of the Absolute (Brahman) is *Jnana,—i. e.,* Self-Effulgence (*Svaprakasa*), Knowledge, Experience, Consciousness *in itself*,—not that which is known under *conditions* of consciousness." The Taittiriya-Upanishad distinctly says of the Brahman—" From which language recoils (without being able to describe it), and which the mind also cannot know." Our critic says:—"Brahman was knowable, realisable." Sankara, following the

Upanishad, says that Brahman is Knowledge, Experience, Consciousness,—one and absolute and unconditioned,—and, therefore, *not* "Knowable" *as an object*,—for it is the Innermost Self of all and, as such, has not the "objectivity" that our critic postulates regarding it. Further, our critic goes on to say:—"Ramanuja accepted that the Veda was revelatory in character. If the intention of an individual was objective, it could be elevated to the rank of truths propounded by the Vedas. This was Ramanuja's test of truth." Intuition is thus clearly *different* from the Veda as an accepted source of truth—and thus we are helped to confirm the Advaitin's old claim and contention that Sankara alone bases his doctrine on the eternal rock of the Veda. Dr. Thibaut, too, admits that "the Vedanta of Gaudapada and Sankara would in that case mark a strictly orthodox reaction against all combination of Non-Vedic elements of belief and doctrine with the teaching of the Upanishads." (III) Sankara accepts the validity of all Pramanas, and we have already quoted his statement that "each Pramana has its force in establishing the truths pertaining to its own sphere of operation." He maintains that the Veda alone is Pramana for

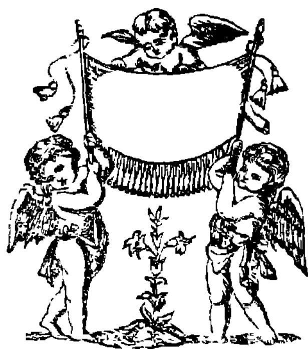
all knowledge which is supersensuous, and hence also for the one absolute existence which is the Innermost Bliss of the Self beyond all the phenomenal and conditioned manifestations of the Universe. In the Taittiriya Upanishad it is pointed out (1) that Brahman is the Innermost Self (Chap. II); and (2) that Bhrigu realises it as such with the aid of his Guru (Ch. III). As Sankara also says in his *Svatma-Nirupana* :—"Sruti has for its purport only that which has value" (*prayojana*). Now *Sabda* (or Sruti) and *Artha* are inseparably and eternally connected ; and hence the former always reveals, as it must, the latter. Wherever it fails to reveal the truth, it is only owing to the mind's prepossession or ignorance acting as an obstacle and a screen to such revelation. The object of *Vichara* or inquiry into the purport of the Veda is to remove the obstacle so that the words and sentences of the Veda may fiulfil their function of revealing what is real and true.

It is the ignorance of the one self which has caused the bondage (*bandha*) of man in his Samsaric course in the world of phenomena. The Gita has repeatedly pointed out that *bandha* consists in

(a) *sanga* (the egotistic attachment of the individual self to action as its agent) and (b) *phalabhisandhi* (the desire to reap the fruits of activity); and also that release (*Mukti*) consists in not thinking, 'I am the doer' and 'I am reaping the fruits of my activity' (XVIII, 7, and 17). When the knowledge of the truth is gained, and ignorance is dispelled, through the Veda, the bondage of samsara is made to vanish and the one innermost Bliss of the Self shines in all its glorious self-effulgence,—and this is the highest of all values, the *summit of all values*.

Lastly, a brief word has to be said in reference to the notion, prevailing in some quarters that *Ramanuja alone has founded his doctrine on the* views of a Rishi,—*viz.*, Bodhayana. The author of the "*Sruta-Prakasika*" (the commentary on 'Sribhashya') says:—"Only a Rishi can understand a Rishi's view—all other people have unenlightened understandings". Even if we accept this dictum, which is questionable and unauthoritative, we find that the author of the "Brahma-Vidyabharana" has clearly shown that Sankara's Monistic interpretation of Vyasa is supported by Parasara. For instance, let us take the present topic of the

definition of Brahman, as given in Chaps. II and III of Taittiriya Upanishad and treated by Vyasa in his Sutra 2 (Chap. I). Parasara, in his Vishnu Purana, gives the following interpretation :—"That which is of the nature of Existence only (Satta-Matra), which is totally free from all differentiation or limitation (*bheda*), which cannot be truly comprehended even through the words (of the Veda), and which shines by its own self-effulgence (*atma-samvedya*),—that knowledge is known by the name of Brahman."





VII

MAYA (OR AJNANA)

THE modern Pragmatic school of thinkers deny and even ridicule the metaphysical distinction between Experience as transcendental and experience as a phenomenon. For instance Mr. Dewey, the leader of the school in the United States, has recently expressed his opinion that, when philosophers have, as the result of reflection, alighted upon a distinction between what is stable and good in quality, they withdraw it from the sphere of practical pursuit and choice, and elevate it into an "asylum for contemplation or a theme for dialectical elaboration, instead of an ideal to inspire and guide conduct." He holds, further, that "the contents and the form of ultimate absolute experience are derived from and based upon the features of actual experience, the very experience which is then

relegated to unreality by the supreme reality derived from unreality." This explanation (or conjecture) is, or may be, true of such *mere speculation* as forms the basis of Western metaphysics from Democritus and Plato down to Kant and Hegel. But, as already frequently pointed out, the Indian Vedantin does not base his doctrine of Reality on mere speculative analysis and reasoning, but on the logical co-ordination and synthesis of the statements found in the eternal and divine revelation of the Veda as the one source of truth.

Mr. Dewey says rightly :—"Not safely can an '*ism*' be made out of experience. For, any interpretation of experience must perforce simplify; simplifications tend in a particular direction: and the direction may be set by custom which one assumes to be natural simply because it is traditionally congenial. For at least two hundred years, many interests, religious, industrial, political, have centred about the status of the individual. Hence the drift in all the systems save the classic traditional school has been to think in ways that make individuality something isolated and central. When the notion of experiences is introduced, who is not

familiar with the query, uttered with a crushingly triumphant tone,—'Whose experience'? The implication that experience is not only always somebody's, but that the peculiar nature of somebody infects experience so pervasively that experience is *merely* somebody's and hence of nobody and nothing else." We have quoted this long passage to show how narrow, inadequate, and therefore vulnerable is both the matter and method of Western thought,—how its problems and pronouncements in spite of its noisy and proud pretension to have as their support the precise content of the experience of individuals, are *avowedly* based on mere "interests"—and, when they are not so based, on what Mr. Dewey explains as "that which is close at hand", and describes as "experience in its gross and macroscopic straits,"—*i.e.*, not only the empirical data which goes by the name of science, but anything else we can think of, whether magic, myth, mystery, reverie, imagination, ignorance, abnormality, insanity, disease, and what not, if only the phenomena find their entrance into a thinker's mental equipment and are utilised by him as the materials on which to expend his powers of analysis and reasoning so as to build up his system of doctrine.

The Indian mind can never find rest—or even food for meditation—in what Mr. Dewey recognises as experience only "denotatively found"; nor is its method of reasoned and fruitful synthesis to be wasted upon such unpromising materials as form the "natural" phenomena from whose investigation and analysis the Western thinker hopes to construct the "supernatural" world of metaphysical reality which is to bring peace and satisfaction to the philosophic mind of every inquirer after eternity. As already frequently explained (under previous headings) the Vedantin builds his doctrine of reality on the divine revelation of the Veda. He also resolves to practise the methods taught therein in order to perfect his higher nature so as to realise the perfect truth and joy which is to make him for ever free from the bondage of phenomenal experience.

Like all other schools of Indian religion and thought, the Vedanta holds that *samsara*—the course of births and deaths in the phenomenal universe—is a burden, and brings misery to the *Jiva*, but differs from them in ascribing its origin to *Ajnana*,—the phenomenal ignorance of the true of the One Self (or absolute Reality). Now, what is the nature of *Ajnana*?

This *Ajnana* is also otherwise known as Maya. A good deal of obloquy and denunciation has been directed against the Advaitin as being a Mayavadin. But, in truth Maya is only a synonym for *Prakriti* (primordial matter). The Svetasvatara Upanishad says :—"Know Maya to be the same as Prakriti." And Sankara also says in his bhashya on Sutra I. 4, 3,—"That causal potentiality of the world is of the nature of ignorance (*avidya*); it is denoted by the term *avyakta* (undeveloped); this *avyakta* is, in some places called by the term *akasa*; in some places it is spoken of by the term *akshara*; in some places it is suggestively indicated as Maya."

The Vedanta holds that there are three kinds of existence : (1) *Paramartha*, the one absolute reality, which is always the same—never subject to any change of form from any limitations of time, place, or action from any other similar or dissimilar thing. (2) *Vyavahara*, the world of phenomena, external and internal, which we know through the medium of the intellect or the senses. (3) *Pratibhasa* apparent existence like what we see in the state of dream, or a pure mirage and fabrication of the mind like the silver superposed on a mother-of-

pearl which, from mere mistake of observation, we do not perceive truly.

Ajnana or *Maya*, (*Nature* in its undeveloped and unmanifested state) belongs to the second of these three classes—and hence also all the *material* phenomena forming the universe. (a) It is not a mere non-entity (*sunya*) like the horn of a hare, but *bhava-rupa*, positive in nature. Because it is a positive but changing, evolving form of existence, it is not a noumenal (or absolute) and permanent reality and is liable to be stultified, as we know it has been in the case of all liberated souls, past and present, whether referred to or not in the Veda and the allied sacred literature in India. (b) It is not *niramsa* (without parts)—for then, it would not be capable of evolution. Nor is it possessed of parts (*samsa*), for that would imply that it can be destroyed by an adequate application of physical force, and so cannot be the original (though only *proximate*) material cause of the manifested universe. (c) It cannot exist apart from Atman ; nor can it remain in inseparable association with it—as its essential characteristics, *viz*, *anrita, jada*, and *duhkha*, are the very reverse of those of the Atman,

viz., Satyam, Jnana, and *Ananda*. Further, if such inseparable association existed between the two, it will have to follow that, when Maya is stultified its associate too,—*viz*, the Atman—will get stultified ;--and that is impossible and absurd, as the Atman is, by the Veda, defined as the one *permanent* reality which is the indispensable condition rendering possible the manifestation of the universe of phenomena.—For all these reasons, Maya is called *anirvachaniya*—a phenomenon inexplicable in its origin and nature. The *Vasishtha Sara* puts the nature of Maya in a nutshell:—"This Maya, Oh Rama ! is of this nature, viz., (1) its essence (*svabhava*) cannot be clearly perceived ; (2) it gives joy by its self-stultification (*svanasa*) (3) it disappears when it is truly (and fully) comprehended in its essence and actuality."

The above doctrine concerning Maya (Nature or primordial matter) is strongly condemned and denounced by various Indian schools of thought. But the Advaitin maintains his position by a powerful battery of arguments. Among Indian thinkers, there are two views in regard to the origin of phenomena. Some hold that every phenomenon

arises from a *previous non-existence* (*prag-abhava*). These thinkers form the school known as *Asat-Karya-Vada* (the doctrine of the origination of effects without a previously existing cause). Others hold that all effects (in the phenomenal world) exist previously, though in a different form known as the cause. *Ex nihile nihil fit.* These hold the doctrine known as *Sat-Karya-Vada*. The Advaitins take their place among the *latter*. Hence, *avidya* (or Maya), being accepted as the cause of bondage, is *positive* in nature,—not a *non-entity* or mere negation.

The following *further* arguments are advanced in confirmation. *First*, it is supported by universal experience,—*i.e.*, by what is known as *pratyaksha-pramana*. Every one says,—*Ahamajnah*—"I do not know the Brahman." The Nyaya school of thinkers, hold that this ignorance (of Brahman) is a mere ordinary (samanya) negation (*abhava*)—*i.e.*, we negate the existence of Brahman just as we negate a pot when it is absent on the floor in front of us (even though it may exist elsewhere). This view is entirely erroneous. Every ordinary case of negation implies the existence of *pratiyogi*, *i.e.*, the

object (negatived) somewhere,—*i.e.*, the absence of (the perception of) a pot on the floor implies the existence of the same elsewhere. But, in the case of Brahman,—the one noumenal reality—no one has ever *perceived* it as existing anywhere, and so its absence on the floor in front of us does not mean that it exists like a pot elsewhere (and can be perceived as so existing) on earth. Hence, its absence before us cannot be considered as similar to the absence of a pot,—as a case of what is called *samanya-abhava* (ordinary negation). *Secondly*, in every cause of ordinary negation there is wanted an *asraya* (abode) for it,—as when we say there is no pot on the floor. But the one Atman is the one universal, all-pervading *Witness* of all forms of phenomena—both of their presence and of their absence anywhere and at any time. This Atman is to be accepted by all on the basis of the Veda, as the one source of our knowledge. As the Atman is the universal witness of all phenomenal existence (positive or negative) it is also the universal *asraya* (abode) of such existence,—and there is no other, for it is "one only without a second" (*Chhandogya Upanishad*). If we assume that it has another as its witness or abode that will land us in the fallacy

of *regressus ad infinitum* (*anavastha*). *Thirdly*, Can Maya (*ajnana*) be considered as a *prior negation* (*prag-abhava*) which ceases when *followed* by the entrance (and the consequent presence) of what did not exist before? In the first place, we cannot admit this so-called *prag-abhava* as a category at all—for it is indistinguishable from the floor on which, for instance, it is said to be experienced. Further, the so-called *prag* (*prior*) *abhava* (of a pot) can only be related to its co-relative (*pratiyogi*) *subsequent* to our knowledge of the latter,—not *before* such knowledge, as this is a contradiction in terms. Hence the very conception of *prag-abhava* cannot be admitted at all. *Fourthly*, Maya (*ajnana*) cannot be classed under the Naiyayika's category of *Atyanta abhava* (or *sunya*) of which the stock example is 'the horn of a hare'. No conception at all can be formed of it—and it is only a trick of language. The Maya of Vedanta is as already stated, a phenomenal entity, and therefore sublatable when the noumenal Atman is realised. But the *atyanta-abhava* of the Naiyayikas is regarded as *nitya* (permanent) and therefore indestructible. *Lastly*, let us consider the state of deep sleep when there is no dream —known as sushupti. Here we

have no experience of sense-objects. Upon waking, however, we feel that we have been in a state of complete ignorance (*ajnana*). This state is clearly a *memory*, and implies a previous *experience* ; and therefore a positive fact. *Ajnana*, therefore, is a positive fact of experience,—not a non-entity. In the state of deep sleep, it is a positive experience to the eternal and universal witness,--The Atman.

We thus reach the following conclusion:—The primordial Maya and its manifestation in the objects of the material universe are neither non-existent (*sunya*, *asat*) like the horn of a hare,—nor are they *nitya* (permanent reality) like the Atman, persisting in all the three states, past, present and future. Still, they are positive in form (*bhava-rupa*) as having a phenomenal existence and are technically known as *sad-asad-vilakshana*, *i.e* , different from both *sat* and *asat*.

Various questions have been raised and answered with regard to Maya (*ajnana*). We shall refer to them briefly before we conclude this section.

I. When does *Ajnana* take its origin ? The answer is, that is *anadi*, beginningless,—*ajanya*,

without a cause. For, if it had a cause, that again must have a cause, and so we shall be landed in the fallacy of *anavastha* (a *regressus ad infinitum*). Moreover, *ajnana* is like a disease. What we want is a cure. So, we have only to seek a physician who knows, and can apply, the proper remedy. Hence to enter upon an inquiry into its cause is to take up a bootless and foolish errand. To this it may, perhaps, be objected that an investigation into the cause of a disease has often to precede the administration of a proper remedy. The reply is that, in putting forward an analogy, we should not indulge in vague or meaningless generalities. In the present case, the analogy, must be confined to a disease which is definite in its nature and for which we know also that there is a definite and infallible remedy,—for *ajnana* is only to be compared to such a disease.—Or we may compare it more appropriately to darkness in a room which has to be removed before we can find the object we are in search of. What we here need is a light, and no one can be regarded as a sane person who, refusing the aid of a light, starts on the inquiry what is the cause of darkness in the room, when it became dark, &c.

II. *What is Ajnana's Vishaya (object) and Asraya (abode)?* According to the Veda, only the Atman is both these. For, it is the one existence, and there is no other. We shall add a further explanation. All ordinary people, when questioned, reply, "I do not know the one true Self (Brahman)". Further, as already stated, in dreamless sleep, there is an experience of *ajnana*,—and, though we do not *seem* to be conscious of it, we must have had an experience of it, as, after waking, every one says,—"I slept soundly, knowing nothing all the while." Hence we have here clearly a *memory of a positive experience whose object is ajnana*; and it is clear also that such experience of *ajnana* is, and must be due to the eternal witness of the Atman which is of the nature of pure intelligence (*jnana*),

Some hold that as the experience of *Ajnana*—of the fact that we have no knowledge of the one Brahman—is present in the waking state, the Jiva (and not the pure Brahman) ought to be regarded as its abode (*asraya*),—even though the latter (the pure Brahman) is its *vishaya* (object). To this view the reply is that our waking experience itself,

like every other experience, is the effect of primeval ignorance (*mula-ajnana* or *mula-prakriti*), with which alone we are here concerned,—and the latter can have no *asraya* (abode) other than the pure Brahman "One only without a second." *Secondly*, the formation of the Jiva's personality (*ahankara*) is itself due to superposition (*adhyasa*)—or the identification of the Atman with Maya—which we shall next have to deal with; and Ajnana cannot be kept waiting for an abode till the Jiva's personality has come into existence in its own due time in the cycle (*kalpa*) to which he belongs. *Thirdly*, as *ajnana* is the cause of phenomenal bondage for the Jiva, so *jnana* (the realisation of the one self) is the cause of liberation. Both *ajnana* and *jnana* get related, as they must, to the *same* object,—for our knowledge of one object cannot remove our ignorance of another.

To the above observations regarding *ajnana* some objections are put forward. We shall, for example, refer to two. I. A pot covered by a cloth does not shine to our sense of sight. But the Atman does shine though screened by *ajnana*, though not in its fulness of perfection. II. If the

Atman, the *one* knower and enlightener (of the world) is screened by *ajnana*, the existence of *ajnana* itself (and thereby also of the world) cannot be known.—The following *reply* may be put forward *to cover both objections*. (1) Nothing can be decided from the fact that a particular analogy can be adduced against a doctrine. Other analogies may suit and that is enough. Here, we can adduce a better analogy. The eclipsed sun and moon shine, though not in full, even when the shadow is falling on them. Even so, the Atman shines in some measure, even while *ajnana* screens it so as to produce the sense of personality (*ahamkara*) in the Jiva. (2) In the case of the pot above-mentioned, we want two external aids to make it shine, *viz.*, the falling of light on it when the cloth is removed, and its contact with our sense of sight. No such aids are needed to make the Jiva shine for us. The *ajnana* which covers the Atman shines itself with the aid of that which it screens but cannot hide it in full,—*viz.*, the Atman which ever shines in the glory of its self-effulgence (*svayam-prakasa*), while it also illuminates all else that is in the world of phenomena.



VIII

MAYA in the LIGHT of SCIENCE

WHILE the scientific conception of Nature means, or refers to the sum-total of the manifested material objects in the universe, whether coming under the category of the useful or the aesthetic, the Vedantic conception of *Maya* (or *Prakriti*) rises beyond both those classes, and postulates what may be conceived as their one and homogeneous material cause or source (*Upadana-karana*),—the potency or energy (*sakti*) which is both phenomenal and *supernatural* in the sense that it is beyond what is manifested as natural objects. Such a conception of Maya is also *rational*, for it satisfies the craving of the faculty of reason in the ordinary human mind obsessed with the objects of sense-perception—*i. e.* the mind which has not risen to a conception of what is Nitya (permanent) as

opposed to the changing (*anitya*) and therefore demands origins or explanations of the events and appearances of the phenomenal world.

Dalton's theory that *every element is composed of atoms* claims to be able to offer full satisfaction to the mind of the modern inquirer which is searching for the origin of phenomena. The atom is to be conceived as the smallest part of an element which takes part in any known chemical reaction, and every element is composed of small equal particles or atoms. Further, since the time of the late James Clerk Maxwell, the instantaneous propagation of electric and magnetic actions in space separating electrified bodies has been investigated, and the result has been to demonstrate the existence of electro-magnetic waves acting within such space (or field) exactly like light-waves. This 'field' theory had led to the overthrow of the older idea of action at a distance,—*i. e.* that action between distant bodies was propagated through the material continuum (or space) separating them. It is now held that electricity is itself probably atomic in constitution and that negative electric currents and charges are propagated by means of subatomic

electric particles in movement, now named *electrons.* We thus see that matter (or mass of the electrical field) consists of nothing but electric charges and their results. Professor Bertrand Russell says:—"It is thought that matter consists of electrons and protons which are of finite size and of which there are only a finite number in the word." And further:—"Given the laws governing the motions of electrons and protons, the rest is merely geography—a collection of particular facts telling their distribution throughout some portion of the world's history. The total number of facts of geography required to determine the world's history is probably finite." Further, Prof. Bertrand Russell points out that man as he is manifested or known to us is a part of this physical world. His body like other matter is composed of electrons and protons which, so far as we know, obey the same laws as those not forming part of animals or plants." Also, "what we call our thoughts seem to depend upon the organisation of tracks in the brain in the same sort of way in which journeys depend upon roads and railways. The energy used in thinking seems to have a chemical origin; for instance, a deficiency of iodine will turn a clever man into an

[illegible] Mental phenomena [illegible] mental structure."

Now, it is easy to see that the reasoning faculty in man which seeks for origins cannot remain satisfied with the scientific theories above propounded according to which the origin of all the objects in the world is to be found in electrons and protons and the laws governing their motions. The Vedanta attempts to meet the further demands of the reason, and postulates the existence of Maya to account for the existence of even such phenomena or facts as electrons and protons recently discovered by scientific investigators. But how has Maya been discovered? On what authority are we asked to accept it as a fact? The reply is given in the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*:—"By resorting to the process of meditation (*dhyana-yoga*) the sages *directly perceived* the creative power (*sakti i.e., maya*) of the divine being (*devatma*), (which exists) though concealed by its own (evolving) *Gunas*,"—the three constituent material substances known as *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. *Maya* is thus an *experience of the sages in their practice of the method of meditation*. Hence, it is not a mere *appearance*, and still less a *symbol*

of such appearance. For, *maya*, as a fact and experience, can never be stultified as long as the material world exists in any of its three states (of origin, manifestation, destruction). Further a *symbol* is only "a mere help or expedient to facilitate our viewing things," and so is not and need not be an experience (or even appearance) in the concrete. *Maya* is therefore something far higher—an existing fact or experience discovered by the sages in their process of meditation as the material cause (*Upadanakarana*) of the manifested phenomena of nature. It takes the human mind *behind* all such manifested phenomena, and is to be accepted as the material causal source and origin of them all.

In order to further elucidate the conception of *Maya*, we shall refer to the following passage from the *Rig-Veda* :—"Then (*i.e.*, during the time of *pralaya*, universal destruction) there was neither *asat* nor *sat*" (X. Sukta 119, Rik 1). *Asat* means a pure negation, a mere fiction of the imagination contradicting all our experience (or conception) of objects possessing a name or form, as for example, the horn of a hare. *Sat* is an object (or phenomenon) of experience, actual or possible, and so capa-

ble of being realised or conceived as having a form and name. If before creation neither of these two classes of objects existed, then what was there? The same *sukta* (hymn), Rik 3 says :—"Before creation there existed darkness (*tamas*) enveloped by darkness (*tamas*)." Sayanacharya explains it as follows :—"by *tamas* is here meant, the ignorance (*ajnana*) positive in its nature (*bhava-rupa*), and having also *maya* as another proper name (*samjna*)' ...."Even as the darkness of the night hides all objects from the view, so the ignorance positive in its nature which has *maya* as another proper name for it and conceals the Atman, the One reality, is here called *tamas*." We learn also from the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* :—"Know *prakriti* (primordial causal matter) to be *maya* (illusory manifestation or magical enchantment); and the supreme Lord (*mahesvara*) to be *mayi* (the magician who produces the illusion or enchantment)." Thus in the Veda and Vedanta, the primordial matter which is of the nature of ignorance (*tamas*) and illusion (*maya*) is made to account not only for the origination of the manifested objects in nature, but also for the *elements* out of which they are composed, *viz.*, the fine atoms, or even the finer electrons (entering into

the composition of atoms) which scientific theory is now led to postulate. The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* calls *prakriti* by the name of *maya* (*i.e.* illusion or appearance). Hence, the material objects or phenomena of the universe issuing—through Isvara's creative resolve, out of Prakriti are all unreal like the deceptive appearances produced by the power of enchantment possessed by a magician (*mayi*, as Iswara too, is called in this same Upanishad). Thus however real both *Prakriti* and the objects of the phenomenal universe may seem to us when we have an experience of them, they are all stultifiable (*badhya*) by our knowledge of Brahman. For they do not, and cannot, exist independently of Brahman. Brahman alone is the support of both *Prakriti* (*maya*) and of the objects of the phenomenal world springing from it when conditioned by *Maya*. Till the time for creation comes through such a conditioning process we must understand that the "energy (*maya* or *sakti*) of the self-effulgent Self (*devatma*) is hidden by its own (constituent) *gunas*."—*i.e.*, the three material substances (*viz.*, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) evolved from *Maya* (*Svetasvatara Upanishad*). There are various passages which similarly teach that the pure self, when conditioned by *Maya*-

in the objects around us. But as already shown, there can be no such world of "realities in the making" without the Vedantic (and reasoned) postulates of *Brahman* and *Maya* and the congruous conception of a Divine Ruling Personality to which they logically lead.



ous terms, as already pointed out) concealing the pure (noumenal Self).

First, we shall meet what we may call a formal objection—*viz.*, How can adhyasa have an origin at all, if it is *naisargika*, inherent in matter at its creation. The *reply* is, that ajnana, or prakriti, or primordial matter is positive in its nature (*bhava-rupa*)—not a mere negation—and is the fine and subtle form of the grosser material world of creation. Though from a merely *theoretical* point of view, the Atman is the one existence without a second, and therefore both the efficient and material cause of the phenomenal universe when it comes into existence, —from a *practical* point of view, *prakriti* (primordial matter, maya or ajnana) is alone its *material* (upadana) cause,—*i.e.*, when adhyasa has taken place. From the same (or practical) point of view, therefore, this adhyasa may be reckoned as its *efficient* cause (*nimitta-karana*). Further, as we have (in the previous section) distinguished between *karanadhyasa* and *karyadhyasa*, we can be sure, that, when Sankara refers to our *loka vyavahara* (our worldly experience and activity), he refers to *karyadhyasa*. Hence, there is nothing objectionable

in regarding prakriti (primordial matter) by itself alone as the material cause (*upadana-karana*) of the universe. Furthermore, no material object (by itself or the pure Self alone) without adhyasa can be known as at all existing. Knowledge (or experience) implies the distinction between a bhokta (seer) and a *bhogya* (the object seen). The noumenal Self, being "one only without a second", can be neither of these two. It has no parts,—and so is incapable of being transformed into anything else. For the same reason, it cannot be touched (or stained) by anything outside. It is also irresponsive and so incapable of absorbing or incorporating into itself anything from outside so as to form a part or limb through which it can establish relations of any sort with what it is not,—with the not-Self. But the Ego (or the conditioned Self) is a self-revelation, and is experienced by all. Its experience is the effect of *karyadhyasa* (or differentiation of the pure self by the objects of the Universe). This conditioning process, while it prevents the shining of the Absolute (*Atman*), is unable to prevent the glorious self-effulgence (*Svayamprakasa*) of the latter from getting imparted, in however

dilated a form, to the living self-conscious Ego (Jivatman). Hence, it illuminates all objects presented to it,—and we can therefore easily realise how the consciousness of the Ego arises as the effect of the earlier adhyasa, *viz.*, the identification of our internal organ (or mind) with the Atman.

We now pass to a *second* objection, which is also one purely formal (if not also frivolous) against adhyasa,—an objection based on Sankara's example of darkness and light, and meant only to illustrate how obvious it is that Vishaya (material object) and Vishayi (the intelligent self) are, by their essential nature, contradictories, and therefore really ought not to be—though, in practice, they are—mistaken for each other. This objection is stated as follows:—(*a*) In a room where only a dim lamp is kept, we find light in its neighbourhood but also darkness in a corner at some distance. *Reply*: What Sankara means is that darkness and light cannot exist together and mix so that one my be mistaken for the other. For, where one is found, the other cannot be. (*b*) Darkness is a mere negation, the mere absence of light. Hence it has no analogy to a material object (*Vishaya*). *Reply*: Darkness is not a mere nega-

tion. For, even when he is in a room well-lighted, a man who shuts his eyes sees darkness within his eye in the space between the lids and above the white (of the eye). (c) If darkness (*tamas*) is positive (and so has form, *rupa*) why is it not felt by the sense of touch? *Reply*: A thing may be felt by touch, and still have no form,—as we know by the case of wind. Similarly, darkness, though it cannot be touched, has a form which is visible. Further, smoke is an object which can be felt only when it comes into contact with the eye, but not elsewhere, —and so it must be declared to have form. Why then, should we not similarly conclude that darkness has a form, though it cannot be *felt* at all anywhere by the sense of touch. For these and other reasons, we conclude that darkness is not a mere negation, but something positive, and so there is nothing to object to in Sankara's illustration of light and darkness to show that *Vishaya* and *Vishayi* are contradictories.

A *third* objection to Adhyasa in Vedanta is as follows:—The identification of "*this mother-of pearl*" (*idam sukti*) with "*this silver*" (*idam rajatam*) --which is one of our stock illustrations—does not

stand on all fours with the alleged identification of the Atman with material objects. In the former, there are two parts (*amsas*)—(1) "this" (*idam*) which is *common* to the two objects identified; (2) a part *pacrticular* or *not common,*—*viz.*, mother-of-pearl in one case, and silver in the other. The mistaken experience or phenomenon (which we call adhyasa) arises from the superposition and identification of the latter—the *visesha-amsa* (the particular part) with the *samanya-amsa* (common part). But this is not possible in the case of the alleged identification of the Atman (the absolute self) with material objects which forms the crux of the Vedanta. For, the Atman has no recognisable attribute, form, etc., and, therefore, beyond the world of our sense-perceptions, and so incapable of being mistaken for any material object *Vishaya*. *Reply.* All this is true. Still it is, as Sankara has not failed to tell us— a fact of universal experience that such a mistaken identification exists, and has existed for all time; and hence this experience is called *naisargika* by Sankara (as already stated), and also *anadi* (beginningless). The "law of seed and sprout" (*bijankura-nyaya*)—each implying the other as cause and effect—is brought

forward as a settled fact to illustrate the famous Vedantic cycle,—the eternal flow and succession of the phenomena of activity and enjoyment (*kartritva nyaya*), desire and aversion (*ragadvesha*), egoity (*abhimana*), want of discrimination (*aviveka*), and the mistaken identification of the Atman with material objects (*adhyasa*) together with the same phenomena in the reverse order of succession.

Objection No 4, is as follows:—As both mind and bedy are included in the living and witnessing self, it is wrong to say that there is a false or illusory identification of the two. *Reply*: In reality neither mind nor body can anywise get included in, incorporated into, and associated or identified with the ever-pure Atman. As, however, we have all our experience of phenomenal limitation,—of our relatedness to the Not-self and its consequences to us as flowing from the inevitable cyclic law above referred to, we trace it to a competent efficient cause *nimitta-karana*. The *material* cause is *maya* or *prakriti*, primordial, matter, as it evolves into the manifested world. The *efficient* cause of samsaric bondage is adhyasa, the illusory identification (or mistake, *bhrama*) of the absolute

Atman with the phenomenal prakriti or material object. This adhyasa brings in for us our false knowledge that the knower, the object known, the means of knowledge, etc , are all real, though these *really* belong to the transient world of phenomena and vanish with the final phenomenal experience of the Self as Self (*Atmakara-vritti*, or *Akhandakara-vritti*) in which the witnessing Self—*not* the pure Self, *Suddha-Chaitanya*, "one only without a second"—shines and is not yet dissolved (as it must be) almost at the very moment when it occurs for us. Further, if we do not—and will not—accept the obvious fact of the illusory experience of the identification of Vishaya and Vishayi,—of the Atman with its material limiting adjunct (*upadhi*)—we shall have to *invent* some other cause, such a likeness between the two in some particular feature or attribute (*sadrisya*). There can, however, really be no *similarity* of any kind between two such complete contradictories.

In truth, however, we can easily see that, as already stated, if we, in our daily practice, regard the entire collocation from the internal organ (*ahankara*) to the outermost body (*sarira*) as the intelli-

gent ego (*aham*),—and not as an external '*this*' (*idam*) or *thou* (*yushmad*), as we really must—it is due entirely to the power and glory of direct cognition (*aparoksha*) inherent to, and inseparable from, the one pure Atman. Self-effulgence (*Svayam-prakasa*) is entirely of the essence of the Atman, and cannot in any wise belong to any of the substances included in the collocation (*sanghata*) which forms the material limitation (*upadhi*) which gets itself identified with us from the beginningless creation of this world of phenomena to the time of our final deliverence from it.

A fifth preliminary objection is stated as follows:—*There is not the least foundation for* acceding to Sankara's view that this identification of Vishaya and Vishayi, matter and self,—what he calls their *mithuni-karana* (or adhyasa)—precedes as the necessary cause of our world-old phenomenal experience (*naisargika-loka-vyavahara*). *Reply*, (*a*) Here we have to make a distinction between appearance (*pratiti*) and reality or essence (*svarupa*). The two processes—*Mithuni-karana* (adhyasa) and *loka-vyavahara*—*appear* separate, but they are *in reality* to be deemed indistinguishable, for *maya*

(prakriti) is the material cause of both equally. (*b*) Our activities in the world take two forms *aham-idam* (I am this) and *mama-idam* (mine is this). The origin of both is *indicated* in Sankara's use of the term, "*mithuni-kritya*". Without such identification (*adhyasa*) there is no *me* and *mine*, or *thou* and *thine*,—there can be none of the distinctions which constitute the world of phenomenal experience. As thus there is a distinction (of characterising quality) between these two forms of activity—*viz.*, *mithuni-karana* and *loka-vyavahara* —we must not hesitate to distinguish between them.

We now take up for reply the more important and fundamental objection to the Vedantic postulate of Adhyasa.

Objection I. If the Atman is of the nature of self-effulgence (*Svayamprakasa*), how can it ever fail to shine? *Reply.* It does *always* shine, as already shown. But the objects of the material world superposed (*adhyasta*) upon it from beginningless time act as a screen so as to prevent it from shining in its essential truth and perfection. Only the conditioned ego (*aham*, *i.e.*, the living self)—having its origin in the confusion or identification of

the innermost (*pratyak*) existence (Atman) with its merely outer instruments like the material body, senses, mind, etc.,—shines for us. Hence, rational inquiry—*vichara*—alone can convince us that the ever-pure and intelligent self alone exists, and not these material adjuncts which serve as its tools for bringing about its contact with what is outside.

Objection II. If the Atman is the only reality, and there is no second, then all else is unreal, and so cannot be competent to limit (or conceal) what is real. *Reply.* This is merely *apriori* reasoning, and not the *Vichara* (inquiry) which, when carried on with the aid of a truly enlightened Guru, removes the ignorance which has now caused the suffering and sorrow afflicting all who are worldly-minded and defective in the knowledge and practice of the Vedic revelation. Such Vichara also can bring about the realisation (*avagati, sakshatkara)* of the *absolute being* which is behind the world of phenomena, or mere sense-perceptions. We have an illuminating illustration of the difference between the results of these two processes just mentioned in our experiences of the phenomena of dream, or in those we have when under the influence of a magi-

cian's enchantment. These experiences seem for the moment to be real, but vanish soon,—the former as soon as we return to the waking state, the latter when the vision conjured up before us by the magician's wand has ceased after he has finished his performance.

Objection III. Does not *Maya* (Ajnana, Prakriti) in the Vedanta, then, become identical with the *Pradhana* of the Sankhyas?

Reply—No. The Sankhyas hold that Pradhana has an independent power of creating and ordering the world so as to tally with the fruits earned by each individual self as the result of Karma during its career in the universe. They do *not* hold that the Atman is the only reality without a second, and alone enables Prakriti to gain its abode (*asraya*) and its life so as to exercise its marvellous potentialities for good or evil and thereby settle the destiny of the individual at all times and places.

Objection. IV. Why should we not hold that the *Atman*, when screened by Maya, ceases to shine for all, and that is why the supreme joy of self-realisation is closed to all?

Reply—In the *first* place, Maya has no existence or manifestation apart from the intelligent Self. *Secondly*, even when the latter gets screened by, and identified with the Maya, the Atman—which, in its essential nature, is intelligent—both shines itself and lightens up Maya too and enables it to fulfil its own functions. The position is somewhat similar to what happens in an eclipse of the sun (or moon). That is, the sun continues to shine, though not in full, and also makes the shadow falling upon it visible to us. It must, however, be understood that the analogy does not run on all fours. For, the screening earth and the sun are both independent realities belonging to the world of phenomena,—while the Atman is the one absolute reality, and Maya has only a phenomenal existence and never can be known to act (or exist) apart from its causal support in the Atman, even as the apparent silver cannot exist or be known independently of the mother-of-pearl which it helps to screen from our view while finding its causal support therein. Furthermore, in the case of the eclipse, the sun and the earth which shadows it exist apart from the witnessing spectator. But the Atman is both the object (*Vishaya*) operated upon by Maya

and the witness of the latter's operations. Again, while the sphere of the sun is not responsible for its being eclipsed, the intelligent self cannot avoid the responsibility for the degradation or suffering it undergoes in its career through the universe of phenomena through its ignorantly identifying itself with material attractions of all kinds. Finally, while the individual's knowledge of the mother-of-pearl as it truly is leads to the stultifiying once for all of the silver then falsely superposed on it, we see that, even when the Atman is truly known by one individual, the material world continues to exist for others who have not such knowledge. At the same time, no one can rightly maintain that the world of phenomena, or even the causal Maya itself, must necessarily exist for ever. For the very same *pramanas* (sources of true knowledge) which establish the fact of *adhyasa* also point out that the means for its stultification (*badha*) and the resulting emancipation of the soul from the bondage of ignorance are available to all.

Objection. V. All this is mere reasoning meant to establish *adhyasa.* No mere reasoning can dispose of the reality of the objects of sense-

perception which lie about us at every turn and whose true existence even as we perceive them we indicate by such expressions as 'this pot exists (सन्-घटः 'san-ghatah').

Reply—Such objects of sense-perception only *appear* real because they are superposed (*adhyasta*) on the one truly real Atman as their basis (*asraya*). The reality of an object outside is not its own, but borrowed from another (*anyatha-siddha*). Such purely material objects are merely superposed on and falsely identified with the Atman which is alone real (*Sat*). They are all included in *drisyah* (objects seen). In reality, all sense-experiences are subject to change or limitation in place and time. The Atman alone is free from such change, and so is truly real (*Sat*). Experiences must be rightly interpreted. For instance, when an iron globe is on fire, the iron and the globe *only appear* as one. So, also, the mind and body and even some external objects which are purely material and lifeless *appear* identified with the living individual soul (*Jivatman*).

Again, is not the silver falsely superposed on the mother of-pearl also *drisya*,—seen as existing

outside ? And, if we can justifiably conclude that it is also truly real on the ground that sense experience tells us so, we shall only find later that we have only fallen into a fatal error. In order to avoid such error, we hold that (a) our *ignorance* of the precise nature of the object presented to us (*mother-of-pearl*), *combined* with (b) the *known* element in it, *viz.*, '*this*', produces the actual experience (we have) of the form, 'this silver'. The silver is a worthy offspring of ignorance (the element marked *a*) when it is associated with the desire for silver already ever present in the human mind and is therefore technically known as *avidya vritti*,—a product of ignorance, and therefore a false appearance. If this explanation is objected to on the ground the silver appearing before us is already known and present as an impression (*samskara*) in the mind and so does not require to be '*produced*' anew as is superfluously assumed in the above explanation, the reply is that, in the case, too, of an object *inferred* to exist—for instance, the fire on a distant hill mentally realised as a judgement arrived at from the sight of smoke thereon—the *samskara* in the mind which has helped us in arriving at our (inferential) judgement must produce an *actual* experience of smoke ; but we

know that there is no such experience or appearance. Even though the judgement arrived at by the mind as inference has removed the previous ignorance regarding the existence of smoke, there is not produced the *vritti* (or transformation of mind) needed to produce either a true knowledge (as in the case of a material object actually situated before us) or a mere illusory appearance, as in the case of the silver falsely superposed on a mother of-pearl. Though, in both cases, there is a common originating cause, *viz.*, a *vritti* or transformation of the mind, there is a difference in its nature arising from the circumstance that, in the former case, there is a material object present to our sense of sight, while, in the latter case, there is a mere fabrication by the mind of an apparition which springs from what may be called the magic power of our (positive) ignorance of the object outside us. We already know that *maya* (*ajnana*, *prakriti*) is positive root-cause of the entire manifested universe,—whatever the nature of the manifestation may be, whether one actual, or only apparent. In the former case, there is an actual transformation of the mind by the object existing outside, and the knowledge which results is not stultifiable, though liable to the fading influence of time. In

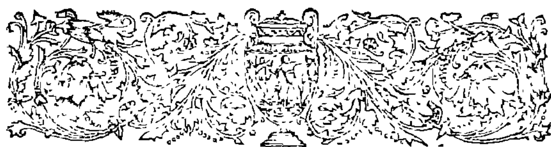
the latter case there is no such object outside to be actually sensed by us, but only an illusory form (*akara*) a mere apparition, *discerned directly by the witnessing self*—*sakshi-bhasya*, as it is called in the phraseology of the Vedanta—even as are our experiences in the state of dream or when under a juggler's power of magical enchantment ;—there is only what is called a *pratiti* (appearance). We may even call it *viparyasa* (false knowledge). It only *seems* to exist at the time of its appearance, and it does not exist at any other time. Hence, we call it *avidya-vritti*, a *direct* result of ignorance, without the usual mediation or intervention of an operation of the mind in its normal association (*samyoga*) with the living self. In relation to such a false appearance, we may hold that there is a coalescence of knowledge and existence, similar to what happens when a drop of water is on a piece of glass and a person looking into it has his face reflected and sees the image in the water and that in the silver coalescing into one and the same impression.

ASPECTS OF ADVAITA.



PART II.

ADVAITA AND MODERN THOUGHT



I.

Modern Scholarship and the Upanishadic Source of Advaita.

THE word Upanishad has been used as meaning a secret (Rahasya) or a session of study or a subjugation of *Samsara.* While the *mantras* are hymns to Gods and the Brahmanas are ritualistic manuals, the Upanishads are a record of diverse *Sadhanas* and diverse mystic spiritual experiences. In some cases we have the Aranyakas as an intermediate stage between the Mantras and Brahmanas on the one hand and the Upanishads on the other. They are books of forest meditations and show the transition from society through solitude into self-realisation. The Upanishads may contain many topics just as the scriptures of other religions do but their vital essence is the mystic experiences of sages and seers and saints.

Modern western scholars speak of the early prose Upanishads and the later verse Upanishads, and the latest prose Upanishads. Indigenous Indian Scholarship makes all of them dateless and eternal. But the best way of dealing with them is to realise that though different seers at different times had and recorded their spiritual experiences, the realisations relate to ever-existing and eternal facts which exist in God while human beings come and go. What we have in them are discoveries and re-discoveries of eternal things which reside in the infinite Godhead. That is why the seers are called *Mantra Drashtas* (the seers of Mantras).

Some scholars take the seers to be unhistorical and say that the later compilers may have used older traditional names. Indigenous Indian scholarship says that the exact succession of words including even the names of individuals who must have lived at different times comes from the lips of Brahma. Very likely the correct theory is midway between these extreme views. The seers were real persons. The truths which they perceived and gave out were realised and revealed at different times. But this fact cannot and does not affect the eternal reality and the eternal value of the truths themselves.

The western scholars have introduced another element of uncertainty and confusion. They say that the Upanishads represent a Kshatriya revolt against the Brahmans. The fact is that there were Brahman seers as well as Kshatriya seers and that neither had any objection to learn from the other. The Bhagavad Gita refers to one line of teaching *viz*.. God, Sun-God, Manu, Ikshvaku, and so on. That was the Rajarshi line of teaching. In the same way there were many lines of Brahmarshi seers also. Yajnavalkva was a Brahmin. Janaka was a Kshatriya. Both were perfect seers and sages and saints.

While philosophy went its own way in western thought irrespective of religion, in India philosophy was based on religion and found its fulfilment in religion. In South Indian Vaishnavism the mystic experiences of later seers were added to those of the Vedic seers as materials for philosophy. Some critics and scholars profess to find a ritualism and a revolt against ritualism in the Vedas. Such an inference cannot be drawn from the passages in the Upanishads describing the non-eternal character of the fruits of ritual. *Nastyakritah Kritena* (Action

cannot produce the actionless). The only proper inference is a reference to difference of levels. The sap is fulfilled in the flower, and the flower in the fruit. The upper floor rests on the ground floor. We must properly understand the passages which seem to talk slightingly of the *Karma kanda.* They refer not to a reaction against Karma but to a fulfilment of Karma. In the language of the Bhagavad Gita *Sarvam Karmakhilam Partha Jnane parisamapyate* (Chapter IV verse 33). (All this, O Partha ! finds fulfilment in Jnana). In Chapter V Sri Krishna says that persons who are not pandits speak of Samkhya and Yoga as separate and that by pursuing either in the proper spirit the fruit of both is obtained and that what is obtained by Samkhya is obtained by Yoga and that he who sees both Samkhya and Yoga as one sees aright (V, 4 and 5).

The western scholars have fallen into another error in thinking that the Upanishadic seers did not care for the authority of the Vedas but rested their authority on their personal greatness or on the greatness of their *Sampradaya* (tradition). A similar view is attributed to Sri Krishna because in Chapter II of the Gita He condemns those who love Veda Vada (Vedic disputation) and assert that

there is nothing in the Veda but ritual. But we must not forget the thorough congruousness of Vedic lore and particular Sampradayas and individual teachers, and it is such congruousness that is the acid test of the value of the teaching of individual teachers. Sri Krishna says: Vedaischa Sarvaira-hameva vedyo Vedantakrit Vedavideva chaham (XV, 15).

Another error of western scholarship relates to the concepts of Sruti and Smriti, Karma Kanda and Jnana Kanda, Para Vidya and Apara Vidya. They find in it a means which was discovered to exalt higher ideas over lower ideas. When we remember that the Sruti was realised and affirmed as being the Supreme authority and that the so-called lower *Sadhana* was only a process towards perfection and has equal value with the higher *Sadhana* as being a part of an inevitable continuous process, we can understand why we were required to harmonise and synthesise both, treating the one as the illumination and fulfilment of the other instead of setting the one against the other and condemning the one in comparison with the other, though *jnana* is the immediate source of liberation.

Another view fostered by western scholarship is that the promulgators of the Darsanas were but system-builders who criticised and sought to overthrow one another's systems and that none of the systems has any higher guarantee of truth than the others. On the other hand the view of the great Madhusoodana Saraswati is that the Sutrakaras were Rishis and that they taught complementary views of truth and that their aim was to lessen attachment to the world and eventually to increase attachment to God till at last attachment to God was perfected into union with God and identity with God.

Even as regards the inter-relation between God and the soul and the world, western scholarship has given it a curious twist. Deussen thinks the view that Brahman alone is true and that the soul is one with Brahman is the real Upanishadic view, and that the other views are a degeneration therefrom. Others think that the doctrine of the identity of the soul with Brahman is an almost atheistic view and have called the holders of that view as crypto-Buddhists (Prachchanna Bauddhas). But the Upanishads refer also to the majesty of

Brahman and its superiority over jivas; they refer also to the Brahman having created the worlds and entered therein; and they refer also to the world being the handwork of God. Some of them say that the world is mere pain and sorrow; others say that the world is the expression of Ananda. Some of them call the universe an illusion and others call it as real. Some of them say that God is the material cause as well as the efficient cause of the universe and others call him the efficient cause while making Nature (Prakriti) the material cause of the universe. Besides all this, God melts away in the Samkhya system while both God and soul and even the world melt away in Buddhist thought. In the yoga system God is only a pure and perfect teacher and nothing more. While thus we have every variety of view from idealism and even illusionism to realism, and from identity of God and soul through an organismal view to utter separateness, what is the way out? Shall we treat all the views as mere philosophic speculations of ordinary thinkers and nothing more? Or shall we take up arms under the banner of one sage or another? The latter was the mediaeval method and the former is the method of western scholars. Or are we to say that theism developed

into Pantheism which developed later on into idealism? When Ramanuja and Madhva came and propounded pantheism of a kind and theism of a kind, are we to call such change a development or a degradation? It seems to me that the key to the problem lies elsewhere altogether. All thinkers in India are agreed that by knowing the Supreme Reality everything will be known (Tasmin Vijnate Sarvam idam Vijnatam Bhavati). We must remember also that the Vedic thinkers were men of perfect mystic spiritual vision. Nor must we forget that no legerdemain can explain away the doctrine of identity of God and Soul and World in such Maha-Vakyas as Tattvamasi, Aham Brahmasmi, Ayamatma Brahma etc. The resort to grammatical somersaults as a means of explaining away such express statements must be rejected as being unworthy of serious consideration. It was a strange piece of good luck or inspiration to have had a word of the neuter gender like Brahman. Atman is masculine but the vivid realisation that the soul is equally in a feminine as in a masculine body took away the sting of the masculine gender of Atman. But God is felt though unseen. We can speak of God as Father or Mother of the Universe and attribute

to God a masculine or a feminine form. The word 'God' has a feminine counterpart *viz.*, the word "Goddess". But the word *Brahman* enables us to get rid of the trailing association of ideas brought by the words "God" and "Goddess". It was realised that if we divest "Atman" of all vestments (Kosas) what is left is but Brahman, and the mind of man immediately intuited in a flash the identity of both. But so long as the Atman is regarded as being in a human body or in the body of a *deva* animating a world, the soul is different from the soul (Isvara) animating the entire universe. If the small vestment of the limited Atman vanishes and if the universal *vestment* of Iswara vanishes in an intensive infinitude of realisation, then there is but the Infinite and Eternal Brahman which is one with the Atman. Hence in the temporal order, there is diversity and gradation. In the realm of Isvara lifted above the temporal order, we can enjoy painless bliss for ever but we can get equal bliss with God or a less degree of bliss just as we desire. But when all sense of time and space and name and form are gone, how can there be any differentiation of God and Soul and Universe ? The Triguna Mind or the Suddha Sattva Mind can effect such a triplicity. But when

the Mind itself is transcended, how can there be a triplicity after Time and Space have vanished as being creatures of the Mind and after Name and Form have vanished also as being something attaching to a Triguna body or a Suddha Sattva body? What is left can only be an eternal infinite unity of Bliss.

Thus as regards the inter-relation of the ultimate categories of existence, western scholarship has missed the real Indian note. Sankara is but a lineal descendant of Yajna-Valkya and other seers. Ramanuja and Madhva are but lineal descendants of Sandilya and other seers. The doctrine of Maya was not an invention of Sankara but was already adumbrated in the Svetasvatara Upanishad, IV, 9 and 10. Maya itself has been used in the Upanishads in two senses *viz.*, an appearance in Brahman and a manifestation of the power and glory of Brahman. The conflicts and confusions of controversy arise from regarding these two aspects as belonging to the same level of experience. If Asmarathya and Audulomi and Kasakritsna (Brahma Sutras I, 4, 20 to 22) can give their experiences of Reality rom different levels of experience, why cannot

Sankara and Ramanuja and Madhva and other teachers be regarded as having done so? If Soul and world are negated in sleep for a time, what is there impossible in accepting the existence of a level of experience in which they are negated once for all and finally?

Sankara's service to Hinduism in particular and to universal thought in general was unsurpassed. He restored God to the Samkhya system and raised the teacher-God of Yoga into the Creator and the giver of liberation. He restored the independent world of Nyaya and Vaiseshika to God as His own dependent world. He lessened the ritualism of Purva Mimamsa and irradiated it by the light divine. He purgated the different degrees of illusionism which had invaded Buddhist thought. He brought in an illuminating concept—call it Adhyasa, Avidya or Maya—and bridged the gulf between Identity and Separateness. The words Avidya and Maya existed before his time and had many meanings and implications which were often irreconcilable and mutually contradictory. So he chose his own word *Adhyasa* and made its exposition the pivot of his commentary on the Brahma Sutras.

His analysis of Truth into Paramarthika and Vyavaharika enabled him to effect a reconciliation of unity and diversity. He is the only Indian thinker who had done for Indian thought what was done many centuries later by Kant and Bradley for western thought—*viz.* the harmonisation of the concepts of the Absolute and of Godhead. It is through him that India enters into the highlands of universal philosophy while maintaining the highest traditions and ideas of the Hindu Religion.

It is not appropriate to discuss in this work in much detail whether it was necessary for Sankara to exalt the Para or Nirguna or Jneya Brahman over the Apara or Saguna or Dhyeya Brahman. Nor do I think it necessary to discuss in detail here whether the sharp cleavage between Jnana and Bhakti need have been so much emphasised. I have my own opinions on these matters and have discussed them in my books on the Bhagavad Gita and I believe that it is the Gita which has given us by God's own voice a perfect synthetic exposition of Upanishadic thought. Let us not forget that Sankara who was the propounder of the doctrine of Nirguna Brahman was also the composer of the most

wonderful devotional poems in the world in praise of God.

Thus according to Sankara there are many souls in the plane of Maya. The world is relatively real in that plane. The cinema show of the world goes on while there is an operator and a screen and an audience, It ceases when these are gone. But it is no loss because in the final liberation we are in the One Eternal Infinite source of everything. Some are in the darkness and witnessing the dance of figures on the screen. Some are in the operator's room and know the nature of the limited projections of limited figures on the limited screen. To a very few there is but one Eternal Infinite Radiant Bliss. To others there is the Karmic life in the created and imperfect temporal and spatial order or the eternal life in the uncreate and perfect super-temporal and supra-spatial Paradise. Creation is not due to any personal purposes of God. It is due to Karma. It is His leela or sport. It is due to His Daya or Grace to enable us to get the light of Truth and attain freedom from Samsara.

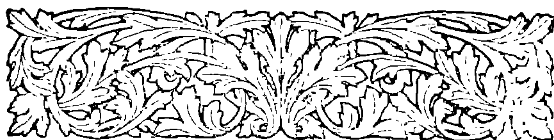
I therefore plead for regarding theism and pantheism and idealism as being congruous in Indian

thought and as looking at Reality from different levels of experience. Pluralism, organic unity and identity need not be regarded as negating one another, though all cannot be simultaneously true and at one and the same level of experience. The end and aim and goal of all is Realisation of Reality. The famous verse which sums this truth is true for ever.

देहबुद्ध्या तु दासोऽहं जीवबुद्ध्या त्वदंशकः ।
आत्मबुद्ध्या त्वमेवाहं इति मे निश्चिता मतिः ॥

This may be lightly described as the staircase theory or the theory of different levels or rather types of experience and realisation. But it is the supreme truth and it was given to Sankara to realise and reveal it to the world.





ADVAITA AND MODERN THOUGHT.

II

THE ADVAITA AND ITS CRITICS.

THE Advaita System is the bright fusion-point of the highest philosophy and the highest religion, and that is why the lovers of concrete ideas and symbols and the sojourners on the lesser peaks of philosophy and religion are puzzled by it and often stand aghast at it and now and then even attack and revile it by means of cheap ridicule. Schopenhauer said:—"They (the Upanishads) are products of the highst wisdom. It is destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people." The concrete symbols and ideas and the more easily comprehensible concepts of Godhead therein have become the faith of the people. But the same cannot

[illegible] of the Advaitic strain of thought [illegible] is as integral a portion of the Upanishads as they are. The *Advaita*, whether it is properly understood or not, has coloured India's thought through and through and is become a portion of the texture of India's thought, even though the masses seem ostensibly to be Saivas or Vaishnavas in faith and to revel in a multiplicity of Dharmas which are apparently at variance with the One without a second. (एकमेवाद्वितीयम्)

The cheap criticism that the Advaitic concept of God is but a pale and bloodless abstraction has neither truth nor value in it. How can *Brahman*, who is affirmed as being the material cause (उपादानकारण) and the efficient cause (निमित्तकारण) and who is hence the core of all reality, be a mere abstraction? Viewed from the phenomenal or relative stand-point, *Brahman* is *Saguna*, *i.e.*, God as Person—God who is the creator and preserver and destroyer of the universe—God who is the abode of infinite auspicious attributes. How, then, can He be a pale abstraction? The theory that the *Advaita* is Acosmism or Illusionism is absurd. Professor Pfleiderer says in a passage full of learned ignorance:

"*Brahman* is an indeterminate abstract Being, which is hardly distinguished from nothing—an abyss which swallows up all finite being, not the positive ground which produces and maintains the finite; it is like the cave of the lion into which all the footsteps lead but none lead out again". The aphorism in the Brahma Sutras (जन्माद्यस्य यतः) shows that the footsteps are leading out again from the lion's cave. The aphorism in the Brahma Sutras (शास्त्रयोनित्वात्) shows *Brahma* as the source of scripture and as revealed by scripture. How, then, can *Brahma* be a mere nothing? The *Upanishad* says: 'स ऐक्षत' How can *Brahma* have *Iksana* (seeing), if it is a mere nothing? The fact is that the word *Nirguna* in *Nirguna Brahma* has made both attackers and defenders mad as March hares. It means only and exactly what the word *Gunatita* in Chapter XIV of the *Bhagavatgita* means. It means that which transcends the *Guna* or *Maya*, which is the sum-total of the Gunas. Sri Sankaracharya says that *Brahma* is *Sachchidananda* and *Nitya-suddha-buddha-mukta-swabhava.* How, then, can it be a mere nothing or a mere pale abstraction? If *Brahma* is *Ananda*, how can it be a mere abstraction? The *Astavakra-Gita* blossoms into raptures in des-

cribing such infinite Bliss ? How can such Bliss which evokes raptures be a mere nothing ? The infinite is not a mere negation of the Finite. It is the only Reality, and the Finite is but a limitation (*Upadhi*) of it. The *Advaiti* rose above the intrusion of sex into the concept of Deity and would not talk of He or She—the Father or the Mother of the Universe—and hence described *Brahman* in the neuter gender. How will that make *Brahman* a mere abstraction ? The great German Eckhart says: "If I say, God is a Being, it is not true; He is transcendent Being and *Super-essential Nothingness*." If this does not make God an abstraction, how does the Advaiti's supra-personal affirmation of God as *Nirguna* make God an abstraction? In some systems of faith there are lingering remnants of geocentricism, and either the pleasures or the diversities of the earth—of course, refined and sublimated—are said to exist in Paradise. In other systems, there are lingering traces of anthropocentricism, and, though the graded diversities and the limited pleasures of life are eliminated, there are yet traces of human qualities in life in Paradise. Because the Advaita washes out all traces of geocentricism and anthropocentricism, does it negate Divinism as well ?

Nor did the *Advaiti* ever negate the world. His affirmation is that from the relative or phenomenal standpoint the world has only a dependent existence, while from the absolute standpoint there is only one reality and hence what seems the world or the individual soul from the relative point of view is identical with the eternal and infinite Being (तादात्म्य). Sri Sankara says that *Jnana* is *Vastutantra* and he is hence opposed to mere idealism. It is this Buddhist *Vijnanavada* that is pure idealism. Sankara says that *Maya* is *Anirvachaniya* and not *Sat* or *Asat*. According to him the disappearance of the Upadhis is not the disappearance of the substance. The breaking of the jar is no destruction of the ether in it—the ether which appears to be in it but is in reality everywhere. The theory of the evolution (*Parinama*) of *Prakriti*, the theory of the inscrutable power of *Maya* in unfolding the universe, the theories of divine *Lila* and divine *Daya*, and the theory of appearance (*Vivartavada*) form but a crescendo of interpretations of the world-problem which the Sphinx of the universe presents to the mind of man for ever and for ever. One explanation is that the One became the Many; the other explanation is that the One appears to have become

the Many. Sri Sankaracharya teaches that the main object of the Vedic passages about creation is to show the identity of *Brahma*—the cause, and the universe—the effect. Much sarcasm has been levelled at his doctrine of *Maya*. Some have called it as an assertion of nothingness; others have asserted that it is an *un-Vedic* importation from within his own mind. The concept of *Maya* is an integral portion of Upanishadic thought. Gough says with truth: "The tenet of *Maya* is no modern invention; the thought, if not the word, is everywhere present in the Upanishads, as an inseparable element of the philosophy, and the word itself is of no infrequent occurrence;...there has been no addition from without but only a development from within, *no graft but only a growth* .....What has been implied has become more explicit...His (Sankara's) philosophy is the philosophy of the Upanishads themselves, only in sharper outlines and in fresher colours. The Vedanta has a just title to be styled, as it is styled, the *Aupanishadiya Mimamsa*." What is *Prakriti* from one angle of vision and *Maya* from another angle of vision and *Lila* from a third angle of vision and *Kripa* or *Daya* from a fourth angle of vision and Sakti from yet another

angle of vision is but *Brahma* when viewed from the centrality of things. Sri Sankara calls the power as दैवी शक्तिरव्याकृतनामरूपा नामरूपयोः प्रागवस्था. The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* says:—

मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु महेश्वरम् ।

Maya has two aspects or potencies, *viz.*, the *Avarana-Sakti*, which hides the real nature of *Brahma* and gives rise to the consciousness of the individual souls, and the *Vikshepa-Sakti*, which projects the relative reality of the universe. From the individual soul's point of view it is called *Avidya* (Nescience), which means relative or empirical or phenomenal knowledge and not mere blank darkness or ignorance. It is this doctrine of *Avidya* that has proved so difficult of comprehension to outsiders. It is *Anirvachaniya* (inexpressible). It is not *Sat*, because then it can never be got rid of. It is not *Asat*, because it produces effects. If we reflect over this doctrine for a moment, we can see its validity and acceptability. Professor Ferrier says: "Some great truth lies here; here, if anywhere, is the embryo of the solution of the enigma of the universe. I am convinced that the unity of the contraries is the law of things; all life, all nature,

all thought, all reason centres in the oneness or conciliation of Being and not-Being." It seems to me that the doctrine of *Maya* and *Vidya* is the centre and meeting-point of all the various radii of world-explanations. As *Avidya* is *Anadi* (Beginningless), it is bootless to ask how it began. Does it detract from the essential nature of God? No. It can be called *Lila* or *Kripa* or *Sakti* from this or that point of view. God has no selfish pleasure in creation and hence creation is His *Lila* (sport). Such creation is only evolution (*Parinama*) and not the birth of something out of nothing. He creates to enable the souls to realize the Truth and be free, and hence creation is due to His Mercy (*Kripa*). He creates by his own inscrutable power and not by any external aid, and hence creation is due to His *Sakti*. All this is within the plane of relativity. There is no creation or dissolution and there is no bondage or liberation in the plane of the Absolute Eternal Infinite Bliss.

Thus the Advaita is not a theory of negation or a philosophy of illusion. In fact, affirmation of evanescence can never be regarded as affirmation of non-existence. In any event the thinker who negates

(the *Nirakarta*) cannot himself negate himself. As Spinoza says, "the criterion of the illusory cannot itself be illusory." The truth is that Advaita neither denies the world nor says that the world itself is God. It is hence not mere illusionism or pantheism. It allows relative or empirical or phenomenal reality to the world and says that the Absolute and noumenal reality is *Brahma*. God is infinite and eternal and hence is both immanent and transcendent (स भुमिं विश्वतो वृत्वा अत्यतिष्ठद्दशाङ्गुलम्). The world is not negated by the Advaita. Nor is it equated to God by it. But that God is the basis of the changing phenomena and is the only absolute reality is its supreme and unique and triumphant *affirmation. The key to the mystery is found in* two statements which appear to be contradictory, but are only complementary. The *Gita* says: 'अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानम्' (consciousness is enveloped by nescience). The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says: 'एतदमृतं सत्येन च्छन्नम्' (The Immortal One is veiled by reality). *Ajnana* (nescience) is one with *Satya* (relative reality). The world is *Sat* (relative existence) but not *Sat* (absolute existence). It is *Asat* (*i.e.*, evanescent) and not *Asat* (non-being). Hence Advaita says that it is neither *Sat* nor

Asat, but *Anirvachaniya*. It adopted such a description to avoid confusion of words. It is in such a sense that it called the world *Mithya* (unreal).

Equally untrue is the cheap gibe that *Advaita* means annihilation or merger of the individual soul. The Rishis felt that the divine in Nature and the Divine in Man were one. Vamadeva realized that he was Manu and that he was the Sun. In the *Isa Upanishad* there is a sublime passage wherein the man of meditation prays to the Sun-god to put aside the blinding rays of the solar orb and says: "The face of Truth is hidden by the golden bowl of the orb of the sun. Remove it so that I may have an unobstructed spiritual vision of Truth."

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।
तत् त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥

Then he beholds the Supreme Reality (कल्याणतमं रूपम्) and realizes that the innermost core of reality in the Sun is identical with his innermost soul (योऽसावसौ पुरुष: सोऽहमस्मि). When the soul which is now realized in combination with the mind and the senses is experienced as it is, it is one with God. The *Atma* is identical with the *Brahma*, which is the *matrix*

and the *prius* and the substrate of everything. It is no more logically impossible to be identical with God than to be in union with Him. Identity with God is not the annihilation of individuality but the self-sublimation and self-transcendence of individuality into the supreme realization. As Principal Caird says, "it is just in this renunciation of the self that I truly gain myself." Every religion is a trumpet-call towards the annihilation of our present food-ridden and sex-ridden self. Is not such an annihilation a transcendence and an enrichment of the self? The Advaita only calls for the highest transcendence and enrichment—for the realization of the Divine Bliss within the undivine egoism. Can we say with confidence that we are fit for communion or union with God? Yes. But that refers not to the soul in its physical tenement and tied to the mind full of passions and desires, but to a different state of the soul. Even so we can affirm that the soul is God. But that refers to the soul which has risen not only above the world, but has risen above individuality as well.

Equally ill-informed is the criticism about Advaita that it has not given an adequate place to

morality. Paul Deussen says rightly that "the Vedanta in its unfalsified form is the strongest support of pure morality." The *Kathopanishad* affirms that one who has not abstained from wrong-doing and who has not attained peace and meditation and self-control cannot attain *Brahma*. No doubt, morality also belongs to the plane of *Avidya* (relative reality). How can there be duties or injunctions except in relation to the Many? Sankara says:

'अविद्यावद्विषयाण्येव प्रत्यक्षादीनि प्रमाणानि शास्त्राणि चेति'

But the hold of the Relative Reality can never weaken except with the aid of the Relative Morality. Spiritual realization will come only to the man who is refined by moral discipline. It is wrong to say that Advaita teaches mere quietism. It teaches and requires moral activism. More than any other system of thought it offers the rationale of ethics. If there is only one background of everything and it is pure spirit, then love is the natural state of being and selfishness or egoism is a pathological condition of the soul, and the pleasures of the senses are but a lure and a delusion and a snare if they obscure and obstruct the self-expression of our innate spiritual nature. The concept of sacrifice is of the very essence

of the Advaitic system of morals. The *Purusha-Sukta* shows how the Lord has set the example of sacrifice in His own person. Sri Krishna says in the *Gita*: "तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम्". The doctrine of the soul being the only reality naturally leads to the concept of *Asanga* or *Nishkama* (non-attachment), which is the heart-point of altruism. Thus it is the Advaita that gives us the key which unlocks the treasure-chest of Kant's categorical imperative. It shows us the truth and value and naturalness of the injunctions directing the negation of *Ahankara* (egoism) and *Mamakara* (possessiveness). A well-known Sanskrit verse says—

उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

Thus love, altruism, non-possessiveness, self-control, and sacrifice are of the essence of the moral life. Another important element is *Tapas*, which is described in Chapter XVII, verses 5–6 and 14-19 of the *Gita*. An equally important element is *Dana* or bestowal of gifts on worthy objects. Sri Krishna says that sacrifice and gift and austerity must be performed and are purifiers of the soul ('यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥'). The concept of *Rina* shows that a man must fulfil a threefold

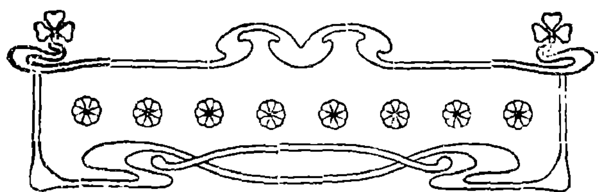
duty to discharge a threefold debt. Thus worship and scriptural study and fruitful wedded life become fixed principles of human conduct. The five Yajnas introduce us into another realm of moral duties and disciplines. Nor is love of God left out. The Advaita declares that love of God is the supreme means of the realization of the Blissful Absolute and that such realization comes as the gift of God ('ईश्वरा-नुग्रहादेव पुंसामद्वैतवासना ।')

Thus the Advaitic concept of the Blissful Absolute is, in relation to all other systems of philosophy and religion, like the universal sky, which allows room for all luminaries and yet includes and transcends them. It does not negate the manifoldness or reality of the cosmos or the reality or manifoldness of the individual souls, but shows their innermost reality. The concept of the Absolute does not ignore or negate the individual souls and the universe—which, in the language of the *Gita*, are its *Para* and *Apara* Prakritis—but releases Being from an inseparableness from Becoming. Dr. Calderwood says well in his *Limits of Religious Thought*: "The Absolute is that which is *free from all necessary relations*, that is, which is free

from every relation as a condition of *existence, but may exist in relation*, provided that relation be not a necessary condition of its existence". This is one aspect of the Advaitic concept of the Absolute. Another aspect is expressed thus in Fichte's words: "God alone is and beside Him nothing is......... The Divine life appears broken up in a multiplicity of things as the light in the prism is broken up into a number of coloured rays......The form ever conceals from us the essence, our seeing itself hides the object we see; *our eye itself impedes our eye.* Yet this only applies to the empirical point of view.........But only raise thyself to the point of view of religion, and all wrappings disappear, the world passes away for thee with her dead principle and the Deity itself enters thee again in its first, in its primal form, as life, as thine own life, which thou must live and art to live. The multiplicity of phenomena remains, it is true, for the empirical consciousness; but it is now known for what it is, as the unsubstantial reflection of the one Divine Being in mirror of thought...... *As soon as man abolishes himself, purely, entirely, to the very root*, God alone remains and is all-in-all; man can produce no God for himself, but he can do

away with his lower self *as the great Negation, and then* he passes into God." Thus it is clear that in the Advaita we have the final and supreme elimination of mere world-ness from the world and mere self-ness from the self. The elimination leaves not nothing but everything. It is seeming loss and complete gain. The loss of untruths and half-truths is not the loss of truth but the gain of Truth. Let the critics of the Advaita lay to heart the following admonition by Max Muller in his *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*: "I should even go so far as to say that this warning might be taken to heart by our own philosophers also; for many of our fallacies arise from the same *Avidya* and are due in the end to the attribution of phenomenal and objective qualities to the subjective realities, which we should recognize in the Divine only and as underlying the Human Self and the phenomenal world".





III

MAN, UNIVERSE AND GOD IN THE ADVAITA PHILOSOPHY.

THE quintessence of every religion lies in its view of man and universe and God. It is easy to say with science that life and non-life exist and that there is no sentient cause therefor or to say with monotheistic religions that God created them out of nothing by the potency of His Will! But the questions naturally arise: How can there be an effect without a cause or why should God will to create and how can He create something out of nothing? The moment these questions are put science and monotheism of the Semitic type keep quiet. It is Hinduism that steps in and gives satisfactory answers. Buddhism gets rid of the problem by negating the world and the soul. But the remedy is worse than the disease. Let us now

proceed to realise the answer of the highest aspects of Hinduism to the most fundamental problem of existence.

The Advaita Vedanta of Sankara takes up a position that harmonises and reconciles Reason and Revelation. Brahman has two aspects *viz.*, *Nirguna* (transcendental) and *Saguna* (personal) aspects. Brahman is the efficient cause (*Nimitta Karana*) as well as the material cause (*Upadana Karana*) of the world. Brahman is neither disconnected with the universe nor exhausted by its self-expression as the universe. Sri Sankaracharya expressly and repeatedly says about Brahman that it is *Abhinnanimittopadana Karana* (inseparable, efficient and material cause of the universe). Brahman is present in its infiniteness in each of its finite self-manifestations. In the Bhagavad Gita the Lord says that Life and non-life are both His Prakritis (Para-Prakriti and Apara Prakriti) and are both Eternal. How can the self-expression of the Eternal be anything but Eternal. In the Gita Bhasya, Sri Sankara says:

"नित्येश्वरात् ईश्वरस्य तत्प्रकृत्योरपि युक्तं नित्यत्वेन भवितुम्"

Hence though *notionally* the Brahman can be regarded as separate from the world in its transcendental aspect, yet such a notion cannot sever the inseparable connection of Brahman with the world, what-ever may be the Self-realisation of the liberated individual soul as the infinite Blissful Absolute.

The world has its *Sarga* (manifestation), *Sthiti* (evolution) and *Pralaya* (involution) just as we have our waking up and activity and sleep. In sleep the senses and the mind are merged in *Prana*. Similarly in the *Pralaya* state, the Energy (*Shakti* or *Avyakta*, *Maya* or *Prakriti*) which is to manifest itself as Name and Form (*Namarupa*) is existent and the universe is merged therein. It is here that Advaitism and Shaktism commingled, though bigoted Advaitins exalt the Nirguna Aspect alone, and bigoted Shaktas exalt the Shakti Aspect alone. Thus just as the individual soul expresses itself in the three states but is not exhausted by them and maintains its unitary character throughout, even Brahman expresses itself in *Sarga* and *Sthiti* and *Samhara* but is not exhausted by them and maintains its unitary character throughout all manifestations. Just as the nature of the Jiva is least obscured

in deep sleep, so the nature of Brahman is least obscured in Pralaya.

Thus the universe cannot spring out of nothing nor can even an Omnipotent God create something out of nothing. He himself has become this wonderful diversity called the universe but is not exhausted or even fragmented by them. The variety was potentially involved in the unity as sweetness in honey, as flavour in ghee, as rivers in the ocean, and as rays in the sun.

मधुनि रसवत् घृते माधुर्यवत् समुद्रप्रविष्टनद्यादिवच्च मण्डले मरीचिवत्'

(Prasna Upanishad Bhashya of Sankara).

The mystery of mysteries—and yet the fact of facts—is that the unity of Brahman becomes self-differentiated into the triplicity of *Isvara* and *Jagat* and *Jiva* and is yet the unity of Brahman! The differentiations, though they are distinct (*vilckshana*) and diverse, are non-different (*ananya*) from Brahman. From the relative or phenomenal point of view which is due to Avidya they seem to be separate from Brahman. But from the noumenal or *Parmarthika* point of view they are one with

Brahman. The world is not false in the sense of its being an illusion or a hallucination. It is false in the sense of its perpetually changing its form, of its being continuously variable. It consists of finite things which come from the infinite, rest on the infinite, and merge into the infinite. All finite things are included in, and transcended by, the infinite.

Thus Sankara ascribes to the world a pragmatic phenomenal relative dependent reality. The world is not an illusion or a fiction like the horn of a hare or the son of a barren woman but is like the mother-of-pearl appearing as silver (*Sukti-Rajata*) or like a rope appearing as a snake (*Rajju-Sarpa*) which have a basis of reality and are eventually stultified. The world of name and form (*Nama-rupa*) has thus a relative reality (*Vyavaharika Satya*) but not absolute reality (*Paramarthika Satya*). He does not say that the world is *Aleeka* or *Asatya* (fiction) at all. That is why the world is called *Anirvachaneeya* (inexplicable), because it is not absolutely real or absolutely unreal. Just as an acter acts many parts but is really himself all the while, Brahman becomes all the diversities of Jivas and Jagat but is itself all the while (Sutra Bhasya II. 1.

18). It is in this example that we find a clear reconciliation of the supposed irreconcileable and incompatible theories—the *Vivarta-Vada* and the *Parinama Vada*. Sankara says in the Sutra Bhashya II. 1. 14:

सूत्रकारोऽपि परमार्थाभिप्रायेण तदनन्यत्वमित्याह...अप्रत्याख्यायैव कार्यप्रपञ्च परिणामप्रक्रियां च आश्रयति ।

The famous Maya doctrine of Sankara is only this and nothing more.

Having thus given a dependent reality to the world, Sri Sankara proceeds to establish also the nature of the soul as an active responsible moral agent. It is absurd to say that Hinduism makes man the play-thing of Fate or equates him with Godhead. Sri Sankara no doubt says that the Jiva is not a Karta (doer) but he means only that doership is not a quality of the innermost reality of the soul, because if it were so, it can never be got rid of even in beatitude. The essential man has as his inalienable attribute infinite Sacchidananda. But the empirical self encased in its physical sheath uses its organism and its environment to realise progressively its true and inalienable nature. The real Self is the

witness of the three revolving states—the waking state and the state of dream and the state of deep sleep—but is not exhausted by them or affected by them in its real nature. The Jiva is dependent on Isvara so long as he is in realition to the body and the senses and the mind, but his quintessential self is one with Brahman.

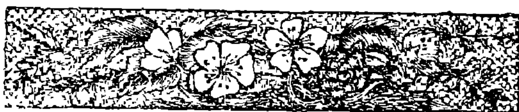
Thus the universe has a dependent reality and exists for the purpose of enabling the souls to realise themselves. The souls have a dependent reality but they are really one with the independent infinite Brahman and have to work out their destiny which is really self-created *viz.*, the realisation of such identity. It is hence wrong to say that the Advaita Vedanta has no room in it for the ethical life. Each soul is responsible for its actions and is a moral agent. The Jiva is entitled to strike off its fetters of Karma by means of *Bhakti* and *Jnana*. These powers will come to us only through *Nishkama Karma* (altruistic action) because it alone will bring to us *Sattva Suddhi* or *Chitta Suddhi*, without which the highest *Bhakti* and *Jnana* will never become our own.

It will now be clear what a supremely exalted place is given to God or Isvara in Sankara's system

of philosophy. So long as the Jiva has not realised his real and fundamental identity with Brahman, but is *rising* step by step in the ladder of physical embodiment in the hiearchy of manifested worlds, Brahman in his Saguna or Isvara aspect is the giver of fruits of actions and is the Lord of all souls (Pasupati) and the Infinite Omnipotent and Omniscient and Omnipresent Creator and Preserver and Destroyer of all the worlds. It is the knowledge of, and devotion to God that will strike off the fetters of Karma. His Grace alone will give us the supreme realisation of the supreme identity of *Jiva* and Brahman.

'ईश्वरानुग्रहादेव पुंसामद्वैतवासना ।'





IV

THE ESSENCE OF ADVAITA.

ADVAITA means non-duality or Oneness. What a bold affirmation! The manifoldness of things is affirmed by the senses. Yet Advaita steps in and declares just the contrary. This seems to take our breath away. As Sri Vidyaranya says in his famous *Panchadasi* :

मग्नस्याब्धौ यथाक्षाणि विह्वलानि तथास्य धीः ।
अखण्डैकरसं श्रुत्वा निष्प्रचारा विभेत्यतः ॥

(Just as in the case of a man immersed in the ocean, his senses are in a state of desperate trepidation, even so the mind, learning about the Infinite and Undifferentiated sweetness of That and finding nothing to grasp objectively, is scared by That).

But what on the other hand is the mental relation to the manifoldness of things in the case of the man

who has realised the central unity ? Let Bhartrihari answer :

> मातर्मेदिनि तात मारुत सखे तेजः सुबन्धो जल
> भ्रातर्व्योम निवद्ध एव भवतामन्त्यः प्रणामाञ्जलिः ।
> युष्मत्सङ्गवशोपजातसुकृतस्फारस्फुरन्निर्मल-
> ज्ञानापास्तसमस्तमोहमहिमा लीये परब्रह्मणि ॥

"O Mother Earth ! O Father Wind ! O Friend Fire ! O Kindred Water ! O Brother Sky ! Accept my last salutation. I have overcome and dispelled the power of the entirety of wrong knowledge with the aid of pure knowledge which shines with limitless glory and which is the result of purity and merit caused by my contact with you. I am entering into perfect oneness with the Para Brahman."

Let me show at the very outset that such Advaitic realisation is not a random shot of the over-speculative Indian mind but is also the acme of the realised and uttered inner spiritual experience of the best minds of the West. Wordsworth says about one of his rich and rare experiences thus : " I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with

all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality...............There was a time in my life when I had to push against something that resisted, to be sure that there was anything outside of me. I was sure of my own mind; *everything else fell away and vanished into thought.*" He speaks of occasions and experiences when

> "The gross and visible frame of things
> Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
> Yea, almost, on the mind itself and seems
> All unsubstantiated."

Shelley sings in his *Adonais:*

> "The One remains, the many change and pass,
> Heaven's Light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly ;
> Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass
> Stains the white radiance of Eternity
> Until Death tramples it into fragments.
>
> "That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
> That Beauty in which all things work and move,
> That Benediction which the eclipsing course
> Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
> Which through the web of being blindly wove

By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality."

Tennyson says thus in his well-known poem on *The Ancient Sage:*

"For more than once when I
Sat all alone, revolving in myself,
The world that is the symbol of myself,
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
Were strange not mine—and yet no shade of doubt
But utter clearness, and through loss of self
The gain of such large life as matched with ours
Were Sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world."

If this is not Advaita, what else is it ?

This Advaita realisation was born in India and was given to the world in India. Why was it so ? Says Swami Vivekananda: "There is another type in Asia. Think of that vast, huge continent, whose mountain-tops go beyond the clouds, almost touching the canopy of heaven's blue; a rolling desert of miles upon miles, where a drop of water cannot be

found, neither will a blade of grass grow; interminable forests and rivers rushing into the sea. In the midst of all these surroundings, the Oriental's love of the beautiful and of the sublime developed itself in another direction. It looked inside and not outside......In Asia even to-day, birth or colour or language never makes a race. That which makes a race is its religion.........And then again, the Oriental, for the same reason, is a visionary, a born dreamer. The ripples of the waterfalls, the songs of the birds, the beauties of the sun and the moon and the stars and the whole earth, are pleasant enough; but they are not sufficient for the Oriental's mind. He wants to dream a dream beyond. He wants to go beyond the present. The present, as it were, is nothing to him." Coupled with this outward pressure of the environment was the inward and upward surge of the Hindu spirit. The special and peculiar inner gift of the Hindu people is its faculty of insight and intuition. Mr. H. H. Chamberlain says well: "The Indians began to think before the Greeks and their thought was profounder and more consistent, and in their various systems they have exhausted more possibilities." It is this rich and rare combination of inner endow-

ment and outer environment that was the cause of the manifestation in India of the apex of all human thought—the Advaita system.

Let me now briefly trace the history of the rise and growth of Advaita in India. He who runs may read its growth during the ages, as the phenomenon is the most noteworthy and presistent of all the intellectual and spiritual phenomena of India. There are none so blind as will not see. We may enroll ourselves as the camp-followers of this or that Acharya or spiritual leader. Each of us may have a special bias for work or meditation or devotion or thought. But if, eliminating all these disturbing factors, we try to trace the development of Indian thought, the one outstanding feature is the persistent surge and forward rush of the Gangetic flood of Advaita thought through the ages. It came down from the eternal snow-clad heights of the Himalayas of the Mantras and the Upanishads:

एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति। एकमेवाद्वितीयम्। शान्तं शिवमद्वैतम्। सदेव सौम्य इदमग्र आसीत्। प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म। अहं ब्रह्मास्मि। तत्त्वमसि। अयमात्मा ब्रह्म।

The Gangetic flood of Advaitic thought then

poured down into the plains. It was handed down by Narayana to Brahma and by Brahma to Vasishtha. The *Yoga Vasishtha* is perhaps the most spacious exposition of the Advaita doctrine and realisation. The stories in it are among the most valuable and convincing in the world. One of the most beautiful declarations of the Advaitic realisation is in the well-known verse.

दिक्कालाद्यनवच्छिन्नानन्तचिन्मात्रमूर्तये ।
स्वानुभूत्यैकमानाय नमः शान्ताय तेजसे ॥

Let me quote a few more wonderful verses here :

अज्ञस्य दुःखौघमयं ज्ञस्यानन्दमयं जगत् ।
अन्धं भुवनमन्धस्य प्रकाशं तु सचक्षुषः ॥

अनन्ते चिद्घनानन्दे निर्विकल्पैकस्वरूपिणि ।
स्थिते द्वितीयताभावात् को बन्धः कश्च मुच्यते ॥

निस्तरङ्गो निगम्भीरः सान्द्रानन्दसुधार्णवः ।
माधुर्यैकरसाधार एक एवास्ति सर्वतः ॥

समस्तमेव ब्रह्मेति भावितो ब्रह्म वै पुमान् ।
पीतेऽमृतेऽमृतमयो को नाम न भवेदिति ॥

The Advaita Ganga then came down through

Sakti and Parasara to Vyasa. It is through Vyasa that it issues into the plains as it issues at Haridwar. Vyasa is the Haridwar of the Advaita Ganga. I know that Vyasa's Brahma Sutras have been claimed by all the various schools of Indian thought as the source of their systems. But as the author of *Vyasa Tatparya Nirnaya* rightly points out, when other *rishis* attacked Vyasa's doctrine, they criticised it on the footing of its being Advaita. Though Vyasa in his Puranas and Bharata laid truly and well the foundations of the Indian faith, the topmost storey of that palace of Indian thought is certainly the Advaita. In the teaching of Suka, Vyasa's great son, the Advaita rushes in a pure and pellucid stream. He shows that fusion point where in supreme love the distinction of soul and Over-soul vanishes in bliss.

प्रेमातिभरनिर्भिन्नपुलकाङ्गोऽतिनिर्वृतः ।
आनन्दसंप्लवे लीनो नापश्यमुभयं मुने ॥

In the *Sukarahasyopanishad* we learn that Vyasa took Suka to Lord Siva for initiation in spiritual truth. Lord Siva replied :

मयोपदिष्टे कैवल्ये साक्षाद्ब्रह्मणि शाश्वते ।
विहाय पुत्रो निर्वेदात्प्रकाशं यास्यति स्वयम् ॥

(If I teach the innermost and unique realisation of the One and Infinite and eternal Brahma, your son will renounce everything in a mood of dispassion and go all alone into the Infinite and Eternal Light).

But Vyasa pressed Lord Siva to teach Suka. Lord Siva then did so. What happened then ? What a master and what a disciple ! The Upanishad says :

नित्यानन्दं परमसुखदं केवलं ज्ञानमूर्तिं
विश्वातीतं गगनसदृशं तत्त्वमस्यादिलक्ष्यम् ।
एकं नित्यं विमलमचलं सर्वधीसाक्षिभूतं
भावातीतं त्रिगुणरहितं सद्गुरुं त्वां नमामि ॥

What became of the disciple ? The Upanishad says :

उपदिष्टः शिवेनेति जगत्तन्मयतां गतः ।
उत्थाय प्रणिपत्येशं त्यक्ताशेषपरिग्रहः ॥

परब्रह्मपयोराशौ प्लवन्निव ययौ तदा ।
प्रव्रजन्तं तमालोक्य कृष्णद्वैपायनो मुनिः ॥

अनुव्रजन्नाजुहाव पुत्रविश्लेषकातरः ।
प्रतिनेदुस्तदा सर्वं जगत्स्थावरजङ्गमं ॥

तच्छ्रुत्वा सकलाकारं व्यासः सत्यवतीसुतः ।
पुत्रेण सहितः प्रीत्या परानन्दमुपेयिवान् ॥

यो रहस्योपनिषदमधीते गुर्वनुग्रहात् ।
सर्वपापविनिर्मुक्तः साक्षात्कैवल्यमश्नुते
साक्षात्कैवल्यमश्नुते इत्युपनिषत् ॥

Thus Sri Suka realised the Universal Soul at once and went filled with the nectar of the supreme realisation. He learnt the 'truth from Lord Siva and revealed the glories of Lord Vishnu. He learnt Truth as Jnana and uttered it as Bhakti, just as the water is drawn as vapour and showered forth as rain. He went to King Janaka and learnt Truth from him also If Suka's life and words do not show the unity of Lord Vishnu and Lord Siva and the unity of the statue of Advaitic Jnana and its pedestal of Karma and Bhakti, then we can never learn such unity from less pure and less inspired lips.

The Advaita Ganga then came down through Gauda-Pada and Govinda to Sri Sankaracharya. We see in him the Ganga at Kasi. He is the *Kasi* (Benares) of the Advaita Ganga. For was he not the Lord Visvesvara Himself incarnated as a man? His disciples contributed their tributary streams of thought to the Ganga of his doctrine.

Sankara's works form the *avimuktakshetra*, the heart-point of the entire body of Advaita doctrine. From him the life-stream radiates to the very uttermost extremities and courses back to the centre for new richness and power. Well has Vachaspati called his *Bhashya* प्रसन्नगम्भीर—clear and deep, a term that can be as appositely applied to Sankara's utterances as to Ganga herself.

If we trace the course of the stream of Advaita beyond Sankara who is the Advaita Kasi, we find it fertilising spacious forests and plains of thought in Vidyaranya and breaking up finally into many meandering streams till it fulfills itself in Madhusoodana's Advaita Siddhi and enters the sea of Brahmananda. In later years Appayya Dikshita summed up the entirety of Advaitism in his luminous and voluminous works. In Tamil we find the Advaita at its sweetest and highest in Tiruvachakam and Thayumanavar's songs a translation of one of which reads thus:—

"Let us adore that Deity Whom the precious Vedas proclaim as Truth Absolute without a second, Who is self-effulgent and is the Self of all selves, Who is the bliss itself and is the source of everything, Who is oneness itself and has no beginning, Whose nature being beyond the pale of

all religions is one of non-dependence, Who is full, beginningless and endless, Who is unique and inheres in all, Who is calmness itself and is eternal and pure, Who is beyond all worldly taints, senses and modifications, Who being non-attached and unaffected shines as the inrunning thread of all, Who though residing in every self as illumination is yet uncognised by the mind and Who exists in everybody's heart as the Supreme God of consciousness."

Such has been the history of the rise and growth of Advaitism in India. It has permeated the entire culture of India through the Brahma Sutras, through the Gita and through Sankara's works. I did not discuss above the efflorescence of the Advaita in the Gita. I will only briefly indicate it here. We find it especially in Chapters V and XIII of the Gita.

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।
स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः ।
छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।
अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥

(Ch. 5).

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।
ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य धिष्ठितम् ॥

यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।
तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात्परमात्मायमव्ययः ।
शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशेनोपलिप्यते ।
सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथाऽत्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।
क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥

(Ch. XIII)

In the above verses we find all the essential elements and even the essential examples of Advaita:— Inner realisation, bliss and glory (*Antassukha* and *Antarjyotih*), becoming Brahma (*Brahma Bhuta*), the Brahmic moksha (*Brahma Nirvana*), the realisation of non-duality (*chhinna dvaidha*), Jivanmukti and Videhamukti (*Abhitah*), oneness of God and Jnani (*Jnani tvatmaiva*), everything being God (*Vasudevah Sarvam*), Para Brahma, Nirguna, the Supreme Light (*Jyotishamapi*

tajjyotih), oneness (*Ekastham*), anadi, and Brahman being omnipresent like the ether and all-illumining like the sun.

The Advaita has not only inter-penetrated the entire cultural life of India but it has entered and vivified universal thought as well. It blossomed in Plato and Plotinus and especially in Neoplatonism. It inspired the mediæval mystics. It thrilled Schopenhauer into exclaiming: "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life; it will be the solace of my death." Schlegel says: "Even the loftiest philosophy of the European —the idealism of reason as it is set forth by the Greek philosophers—appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigour of oriental idealism like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory, faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished." We know how the Advaita appealed strongly to the minds of Max-Muller and Deussen. It permeated and vitalised the genius of Carlyle and Emerson and broke into tuneful utterance on the lips of Wordsworth and Shelley. We know how it was taken by the winged words of

Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore to the West and how it has been a powerful and formative influence there. In fact it is one of the world's great forces outside India.

If such is its operation and such its destiny abroad, its operation and destiny are bound to be even more wonderful in the land of its birth. India is today in the pangs of a new birth. In India we find a blend of many races and many religions, of many creeds and many cultures, India is the great laboratory of the future co-operative civilisation of the world. On the anvil of variety with the hammer of Advaitic unity we must forge the new co-operative harmonious spiritual civilisation of the future. The Advaita alone *tolerates all levels of* attainment and links them all to the vivifying and illumining central unity. All other reconstructions are on the basis of carnivorous or cannibalistic reconstruction—the reconstruction of destruction and assimilation. In the Advaita alone we find the reconstruction of combination into a higher unity, the reintegration of all the colours of the spectrum into the white light. In and through the Advaita and the Advaita alone, India will discover and realise and attain the wider

and deeper and higher spiritual unity, from which and from which alone will come the reintegrated and perfect social and industrial and political unity which will usher the dawn of a new era of peace and plenty and prosperity in India and through India's inspiration all over the world. I conceive such to be the mission of the Advaita in India and the mission of India in the world.

Is the Advaita system of thought consonant with human reason? That is the question which the reason-ridden modern mind asks and asks imperiously. What is the answer? The answer is certainly 'yes'. Sri Sankaracharya's works are a veritable mine of reasons and proofs in respect of Advaita Vada. It will not be possible to go into all of them here but I may just indicate a bare outline of such ratiocination. In Sri Sankara's *Dasa Sloki* we have the argument presented in the clearest and simplest terms. It may be stated thus. What-ever we sense is impermanent. But the Atman which is the witness of all transient and fleeting phenomena is changeless and eternal. In dreamless sleep we reach the Atmic state but without being aware of the fact. The Atma is the

witness of all the three states of being and is changeless and self-luminous. To quote from *Panchadasi*:

नोदेति नास्तमेत्येका संविदेका स्वयंप्रभा ।

(The Atman is pure, infinite, all-pervasive, formless, self-evident, self-luminous Satchidananda).

But the real proof of the Advaita is not in logic but in the Sruti (*Scripture*) culminating in realisation. Sri Sankara is never tired of affirming this truth over and over again. He declares at the same time that *Anukoola Tarka* (reason in harmony with revelation) is an aid to Advaitic realisation.

वाक्यार्थविचारणाध्यवसायनिर्वृत्ता हि ब्रह्मावगतिर्नानुमानादिप्रमाणान्तरनिर्वृत्ता । सत्सु तु वेदान्तवाक्येषु जगतो जन्मादिकारणवादिषु, तदर्थग्रहणदार्ढ्याय अनुमानमपि वेदान्तवाक्याविरोधि प्रमाणं भवन्न निवार्यते, श्रुत्यैव च सहायत्वेन तर्कस्याभ्युपेतत्वात् ॥ Brahma Sutras I. 2.

He says again :—

'अवगतिपर्यन्तं ज्ञानम् ... ब्रह्मावगतिर्हि पुरुषार्थः ।

Do - I. 1.

There are some widely prevalent misconceptions regarding the Advaita. One misconception is that

it declares the world to be an illusion. Sri Sankara clearly declares the existence of three kinds of realities *viz*., (1) *pratibhasika* (*illusory*), (2) *Vyavaharika* (phenomenal or practical or pragmatic or relative) and (3) *Paramarthika* (noumenal or absolute). The existence of the world is neither an illusory reality nor is it a noumenal reality. It is a phenomenal or relative reality. The world is not an illusion but is a transient and relative and phenomenal fact. Sri Sankara expressly says that *Jnana* is *vastutantra* and thus affirms the objective element in external perception. The world exists in fact till the noumenal realisation is attained.

दृष्टिं ज्ञानमयीं कृत्वा पश्येद्ब्रह्ममयं जगत् ।

The cause is a higher kind of reality than the effect. Let us take the well-known scriptural declaration मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम्. Just as a clod of clay becomes a pot, a wall, etc., and is all the while only clay despite all changes of name and form (Nama Rupa) and is the same clay after the pot or the wall is pulverized, even so is the world one with Brahman. The Brahman existed even before creation.

सदेव सौम्येदमग्र आसीत् ।

It is the *Upadana Karana* (the material cause), and the *Nimitta Karana* (the operative and efficient cause) of the universe. The other familiar Advaita examples and illustrations such as gold and golden ornaments (*kanaka* and *kataka*), the ether in the sky and the ether in a pot (*Akasa and Ghatakasa*), the sea and the waves, the rope and the snake, mother o' pearl and silver, (*Sukla Rajata*), etc., enforce the same conception with a wonderful amplitude of affluence of illustration. Sri Sankara's doctrine of *Maya* or *Avidya* or *Adhyasa* is only a compendious way of describing the abovesaid view of the universe. *Maya* is not illusion or non-existence or mirage. The detractors of Sankara misrepresent him and then rise with a sense of achieved victory after disproving what he does not declare. According to him Maya is *Bhava Rupa* (positive in its character) and is not an Abhava or negation. Hence in the famous verse which sums up the Advaita it is said :

श्लोकार्धेन प्रवक्ष्यामि यदुक्तं ग्रन्थकोटिभिः ।
ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ॥

This *Maya* doctrine of Sri Sankara is not an

invention by him but is as old as Indian thought itself. The Svetasvatara Upanishad says:

मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु महेश्वरम् ।

Another Sruti declares:

अजायमानो बहुधा विजायते ।

How can the one be the many at the same time? As the *Mayavadadarpana* puts it clearly and forcibly :

' एकस्यानेकमूर्तित्वं युगपत्परमात्मनः सच्चिदानन्दरूपस्य सिध्येन्मायामृते कथम् ॥

(How can the One Brahman who is Sacchidananda become manifold, unless it be through Maya ?) One solution is by saying that it is because of His Infiite Power. The logical fallacies which vitiate the assumption that the one actually becomes the many are exposed by Advaitic teachers in a variety of ways which cannot be satisfactorily or successfully expounded in this brief chapter. In the Upanishads the Maya doctrine is expressly laid down in many places. The most explicit statement is in the *Sarasvatirahasya Upanishad.* Further, it is a common tenet of all religious systems that

Moksha (liberation) is due to *Jnana* (Knowledge). From this it follows that *bandha* (bondage) is due to Ajnana or Avidya or Adhyasa or Maya. The author of *Svarajya Siddhi* puts this argument neaty thus:

ज्ञप्तेः साक्षान्मुक्तिहेतुत्वसिद्धेरध्यासत्वं बन्धनस्यार्थसिद्धम् ॥

In fact the real identity of the soul and the Oversoul cannot be explained on any basis except that of Maya being the cause of our present sense of their non-identity. From the point of view of the cosmos Maya is the cause of the unfoldment of the universe. From the point of view of the individual soul it is the cause of the obscuration of the perfect identity of *Jivatma* and *Paramatma* and is called Avidya. If we understand its *vikshepa sakti* and its *Avarana sakti* and overcome it by *Jnana* rising into its sublimated state of *Anubhava* or *Aparoksha Sakshatkara*, then and only then can we rise to the Kailasa of Advaitic realisation. Both aspects of Maya are well declared in the Bhagavad Gita in the following verses :

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥

In the *Panchadasi* of Vidyaranya the nature Maya and Avidya is thus set forth :

चिदानन्दमयब्रह्मप्रतिबिंबसमन्विता ।
तमोरजःसत्त्वगुणा प्रकृतिर्द्विविधा च सा ॥

सत्त्वशुद्धिविशुद्धिभ्यां मायाविद्ये च ते मते ।
मायाबिम्बो वशीकृत्य तां स्यात्सर्वज्ञ ईश्वरः ॥

अविद्यावशगस्त्वन्यस्तद्वैचित्र्यादनेकधा ।
स कारणशरीरं स्यात्प्राज्ञस्तत्राभिमानवान् ॥

. . . .

परापरात्मनोरेवं युक्त्या संभावितैकता ।
तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्यैः सा भागत्यागेन लक्ष्यते ॥

जगतो यदुपादानं मायामादाय तामसीम ।
निमित्तं शुद्धसत्त्वां तामुच्यते ब्रह्म तद्गिरा ॥

यदा मलिनसत्त्वान्तां कामकर्मादिदूषिताम् ।
आदत्ते तत्परं ब्रह्म त्वंपदेन तदोच्यते ॥

त्रितयीमपि तां मुक्त्वा परस्परविरोधिनीम् ।
अखण्डं सच्चिदानन्दं महावाक्येन लक्ष्यते ॥

सोऽयमित्यादिवाक्येषु विरोधात्तदिदंतयोः ।
त्यागेन भागयोरेक आश्रयो लक्ष्यते यथा ॥

मायाविद्ये विहायैवमुपाधी परजीवयोः ।
अखण्डं सच्चिदानन्दं परं ब्रह्मैव लक्ष्यते ॥

We find in the above passage a well-known advaitic word *Upadhi*. We find elsewhere another well-known word *Sakti*. The world, as viewed from various angles of vision, is called by different names such as नामरूप, अव्याकृत, अव्यक्त, प्रकृति, शक्ति, उपाधि, अध्यास अविद्या and माया.

I have been impelled to deal with Sankara's Maya doctrine at some length because we have in regard to it the master illusion which is the parent of many subordinate illusions and misrepresentations regarding the Advaita. The *Maya* about *Maya* is much more wonderful than *Maya* itself. Another misconception about the Advaita is that it is indifferent to morality. This is a cruel and false and foolish charge. When it declares that *chitta suddhi* (purity of mind) cannot come without *Karma* and that *Jnana* will not come withot *chitta suddhi* and that *Moksha* cannot be attained without *Jnana*, what a cruel and audacious misrepresentation it is

to say that Advaita is indifferent to morality. The Kathopanishad says :

नाविरतो दुश्चरितान्नाशान्तो नासमाहितः ।
नाशान्तमानसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैनमाप्नुयात् ॥

Who are the real relations of the Yogi or the *Janani?* Let the *Subhashita* speak:

धैर्यं यस्य पिता क्षमा च जननी शान्तिश्चिरं गेहिनी
सत्यं सूनुरयं दया च भगिनी भ्राता मनःसंयमः ।
शय्या भूमितलं दिशोऽपि वसनं ज्ञानामृतं भोजनं
एते यस्य कुटुम्बिनो वद सखे कस्माद्भयं योगिनः ॥

The most perfect moral and ethical attitude is thus summed up in the *Yoga Vasishtha.*

आपद्यचलचित्तोऽस्मि जगन्मित्रं च संपदि ।
भावाभावविहीनोऽस्मि तेन जीवाम्यनामयम् ॥

Well has Dr. Deussen said : "The Vedanta in its pure and unfalsified form is the strongest support of pure morality. Indians! keep to it."

Equally unfounded is the charge that Advaita leads to quietism. Is this quietism the indifferentism of the superegoist? Not at all. In moments of absorption in Brahma Jnana, the Jnani will be quiet,

because *ex hypotheso* he is at that time out of relation to the senses and is in a state of perfect spiritual bliss. Is he on that account to be regarded as a piece of stone ? Not at all. His very presence is a consecration and will uplift all about him by the magic of his realisation. Sri Sankaracharaya says well :

अलंकारो ह्ययमस्माकं यद्ब्रह्मात्मावगतौ सत्यां सर्वकर्तव्यताहानिः कृतकृत्यता च ॥

A man who has tasted Brahma Jnana cannot be in the net of illusion as he was before. Sri Sankara says : तस्मान्नावगतब्रह्मात्मभावस्य यथापूर्वं संसारित्वम् । यस्य तु यथापूर्वं संसारित्वं नासाववगतब्रह्मात्मभाव इत्यनवद्यम् ।

Whenever he is not in blissful spiritual communion, he will be in the relation of love and compassion and service to the world and will do unselfish and godly work for the welfare of all and for the guidance of the world of love and peace and co-operation and dispassion and renunciation. What does the Lord say in the Gita ?

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥

Equally baseless is the view that the Advaita either shows the Personal God the cold shoulder of neglect or damns Him with faint praise. Sri Sankara says in clear and ringing terms:

द्विरूपं हि ब्रह्मावगम्यते नामरूपविकारभेदोपाधिविशिष्टं तद्विपरीतं सर्वोपाधिविवर्जितम् । एवमेकमपि ब्रह्मापेक्षितोपाधिसंबन्धं निरस्तोपाधिसंबन्धं चोपास्यत्वेन ज्ञेयत्वेन वेदान्तेषूपदिश्यते ॥

He says again: मोक्षसाधनसामग्र्यां भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ।

A well-known Sanskrit stanza says:

ईश्वरानुग्रहादेव पुंसामद्वैतवासना ।

The Absolute in relation to the cosmos is the Personal God. But its relation to the cosmos is not

a relation of external compulsion. Nirguna Brahma and Saguna Brahma are but two aspects of the same Eternal Being.

Thus these and other misconceptions about Advaita, widely prevalent though they be, have not an atom of truth in them. The Advaita is in right and harmonious relation to the entirety of Indian ethic and metaphysic; and in it we see the highest synthesis of Karma, Yoga, Bhakti and Jnana. What then are its *differentia*, its special and distinctive and distinguishing features? It unhesitatingly takes its stand on the Veda. It shows the centre to which all radii of doctrines converge. It is as all-inclusive as the sky, and allows all luminaries to shine in its spacious amplitude. It is simple and profound at the same time. Its doctrines of *Maya* or *Avidya* or *Adhyasa*, its *Vivartavada*, its declaration of the identity of *Jivatma* and *Paramatma* and its proclamation of *Mukti* being a state of being and not an acquisition from without are among its greatest distinctions and glories and entitle it to the throne of sovereignty—*Sarvajna Peetha*—in the Durbar of Universal thought.

I shall conclude this discourse by a brief reference to the Advaita ideal of Mukti. The chief glory of each faith is its conception of beatitude, just as its acid test is its attitude towards ethical and social life. The mind of man cannot conceive of a loftier and purer and holier and more blissful beatitude than the Advaitic beatitude. The Advaitic Mukti is not an acquisition but is a realisation of the true and inalienable nature of the soul. The function of scripture is ज्ञापक and not कारक. When *Avidya* is removed, the true nature of the soul as Infinite and Eternal Bliss—*Sacchidananda*—is realised. The Brahma Sutra says :

मुक्तः प्रतिज्ञानात् ।

Sri Sankara says in his *Bhashya* thereon :

स सर्वबन्धनिर्मुक्तः शुद्धेनैवाऽत्मनाऽवतिष्ठते । यदा रोगनिवृत्तौ अरोगो अभिनिष्पद्यते ॥

When a man is freed from disease and attains health, it is wrong to say that health is the effect of the removal of the disease. His health is his natural state which is no longer clouded by disease.

Thus in the Advaitic ideal of mukti, we have no conception of any change of place from the earth.

There is no element of sensual pleasures or sublimated pleasures or superpleasures. It does not admit of any gradation or any graduated scale of bliss. It declares the state of eternal being and bliss as the acme of liberation. A well-known stanza occurring in the Mundaka Upanishad as well as in other Upanishads says well :

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥

The Advaitic Mukti is not Nirvana or extinction but Brahma Nirvana or the attainment of *Akhanda Satchidananda*.

Further, the Advaitic doctrine is that *Videha-mukti* (liberation after death) is the culmination of self-realisation (through Jnana) at the time of death and that *Jivanmukti*, immediate liberation, is the attainment of self-realisation through Jnana even here and in this body. It is the Jivanmukta that attains Videhamukti at the time of the death of the body. Those who pursue the *Karma Marga* go by the *Dakshina Marga* or *Dhoomadi Marga* to heaven (*Svarga*) and enjoy superterrestrial joys there and return to the earth after

their store of merit is spent. Those who pursue the *Sagunopasana* go through the *Archiradi Marga* and attain *Krama Mukti* in Brahmaloka and reach the supreme liberation along with Brahma.

Let me now cull and gather and make a garland (वेदान्तवाक्यकुसुमग्रथन, to use Sankara's words) of a few great Advaitic passages in the Upanishads :

अणोरणीयान्महतो महीयानात्माऽस्य जन्तोर्निहितो गुहायाम्।
तमक्रतुः पश्यति वीतशोको धातुः प्रसादान्महिमानमात्मनः ॥

अशरीरं शरीरेष्वनवस्थेष्ववस्थितम् ।
महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥

अग्निर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च ॥

अमात्रश्चतुर्थोऽव्यवहार्यः प्रपञ्चोपशमः शिवोऽद्वैत एवमोंकार आत्मैव संविशत्यात्मनात्मानं य एवं वेद य एवं वेद ॥

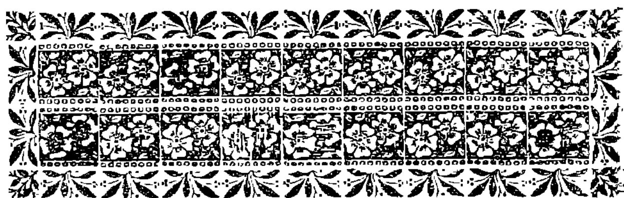
अनेन जीवेनात्मनानुप्रविश्य नामरूपे व्याकरवाणि ।

I shall quote in conclusion only two passages—one from an enthusiastic foreign lover of Sankara's works and the other from the writings of my humble self :—

"What shall we say, then, of the Master Sankara? Is he not the guardian of the sacred waters, who by his commentaries, has hemmed about against all impurities or Time's jealousy, first the mountain Tarus of the Upanishads, then the serene forest-lake of the Bhagavad Gita, and last the deep reservoir of the Sutras, adding from the generous riches of his wisdom, lovely fountains and lakelets of his own, the crest jewel, the Awakening and Discernment."

"Thou bliss of inner vision incarnate!
When I thy holy Bhashyas read, I seem
To see in Kalati by Alwaye stream
Thy birth as master of the cosmic fate.
With *Vidya* as the soul's self-chosen mate
You followed Thought's bright super-solar gleam.
In your victorious march, your mind's bright beam
Dispelled *Avidya's* night of ancient date.
I seem to see in Mandana's great house
Thy orange-robed form in glory shine
Before the arbitress Sarasvati.
Thy four Mutts stand like four fulfilled vows
To build to God thy thought's supernal shrine
And lead mankind to wisdom's ecstacy."





V

Elements of Realism and Idealism in Sri Sankara's Philosophy.

THAT Sri Sankaracharya is the Mount Kailasa of Indian thought is the declaration of all thinkers in India and outside India. This metaphor has more than a passing value and application. It not only suggests that Sri Sankara was Lord Siva incarnate. It suggests also that his philosophy is that dazzling integrated white light which includes and combines the component and variegated and lustrous colours of other systems of religious thought. Being inclusive and comprehensive it has no quarrel with any other religion or philosophy. The metaphor suggests further the insistance of the Advaita upon absolute purity—purity of motive, purity of speech, and purity of action—as the key to Self-realisation. It suggests further that the Advaita is

the topmost point of all philosophy and religion. It suggests further that if it is studied out of relation to the other faiths and philosophies of India it will never be understood properly, just as we can never understand the beauty and grandeur of the highest peak apart from the mountain system as a whole. It suggests further that the Advaita is the first to catch the glory of the Sun of God and communicate it to the world. It implies also that from the mountain system of which the Advaita is the highest pinnacle and the greatest glory come the manifold rivers of sacramental and self-denying duties by which the sinful drought of the Soul is quenched and the arid regions of the mind and heart smile with fragrant flowers of devotion and fruitful harvests of social love and philanthropy. It suggests also that the *Manasa Sarovara* (the peerless lake of the human heart) receives the full glory of the Kailasa of the Advaita with tranquil and unagitated bliss and reflects it in its fulness of affluent beauty to the beholders of Beauty and Truth and Love. It suggests also that the Eternal Sakti dwells in the Kailasa of Advaita and that hence, the Advaita will have an immortal life and vitality. It suggests finally that within it, nay on its very top, shines not

nothingness (as some of its detractors declare) but the Perfection of Fulness—*Santam Sivam Advaitam.*

My endeavour in this thesis will merely be to show what are the elements of realism and of idealism in Sri Sankaracharya's philosophy. Neither of these terms can be applied correctly to his doctrine. Nor is it right to call it transcendentalism or monism. It is best to call it Advaitism. But I shall not now attempt to embark here upon an elaborate exposition of Advaitism with its central truth and all its manifold and intricate ramifications of doctrine which are always interrelated to one another and correlated to the central truth.

In brief, realism is that doctrine which affirms the real existence of the manifoldness of things outside ourselves. Idealism asserts that we can never affirm the existence of things apart from our sensations of them. and that it is only in respect of ideas that we can affirm reality. Apart from the old realists and the old idealism, there are to-day those who are called the New Realists and the New Idealists. Most Realists deal at length with the problem of perception. Their aim is to preserve

and conserve as much as possible out of the commonsense and ordinary view of the world while making allowance for the possibility of error. They hold that the data of perception are the actual physical existents which are the constituents of the universe and that perception is a process by which these objects somehow get within our experience and are directly apprehended. But then how can an object get into the regions of consciousness at once? Further, science teaches that what are the data of perception are not the physical objects themselves but radiations from them. We can see a star long after it is really extinct. Further, the same object has different tints to a man of normal vision and to a colour-blind man. Sometimes to a man with eye-disease the moon seems to be double or treble or even manifold. There are these and many other difficulties in the way of the Realists. The Idealists have many stumbling-blocks also. They contend that the data of perception are psychological constituents *i.e.*, ideas or mental states of the perceiver, which may or may not be copies of outside objects and that the existence of outside objects is only an assumption. But when we see a dog how can we say that the mental state has got a

head or a tail? The mental state and the perceived datum may thus be coexistent but not identical. Further, the mental state of one perceiver must be qualitatively different from that of another perceiver. There must therefore be the object, the datum, and the mental state.

Mr. Bertrand Russell is the leader of modern Realism. He clearly distinguishes between an act of thought and the object of the act. Mind is that which has the characteristic of becoming acquainted with things other than itself. Mr. Russell affirms knowing minds, sense data which are known by acquaintance, universals (*e. g.* whiteness, justice, *etc.*) *which are known by acquaintance, and physical* objects which are known by description. Mr. Joad sums up Mr. Russell's views thus: "A perception of an object is the appearance of the object at a place where there is a brain with sense organs and nerves forming part of the intervening medium. An object is the sum-total of the appearances (of which the appearance which is a perception is one) presented by it at all places at a given moment. A mind is the sum total of all the appearances presented at a place at which there is a brain with sense-organs

and nerves forming part of the intervening medium at a given moment".

The New Idealists headed by Benedetto Croce of Italy have strayed away from the moorings of the old idealism. The old idealism asserted a static Absolute and it located the Absolute behind and beyond our finite experience and thus made reality transcend experience. For Croce and his followers the reality is not the Absolute but *Mind* which is active, mobile and creative. The mind creates whatever it interprets and interprets what it creates. As being creative, mind is History ; as being interpretative, mind is Philosophy. Thus Reality is a perpetual *becoming. What we are aware of is only our experi*ence of an object, and not the object itself. There are no objects of sense and no independent sense data. The mind does not passively receive impressions from real outside objects. But perception is an activity in which the mind generates for itself its own data in the shape of images and intentions and concepts. Concepts are mental and are not classes of qualities in the material world. But there are difficulties in the way of this view. How does our immediate experience which is a unity become a

multiplicity? Further, our immediate experience is partial and finite. How, then, can it grasp the totality of reality? Further, how can we assert that movement alone is reality and that it has no source or goal?

The pragmatists headed by Mr. William James define truth itself as "the belief which works". Thus truth is pronounced to be what is expedient in the way of thinking and goodness and right is pronounced to be what is expedient in the way of our behaviour. The pragmatist regards experience as a continuous flux or stream out of which the mind selects certain aspects according to the interests of the perceiver. But if experience is a mere amorphous thing, why should the mind select and carve certain objects rather than others? Why should my mind carve out a temple if there is no essential feature in reality in virtue of which I carve out a temple and not a tree? If the mind makes its own facts, how can it happen that facts sometimes antagonise our theories or postulates or beliefs? If on the other hand experience itself is not a featureless flow but has got articulateness, then our mental selection is determined in part

by the individuality of experience. Further, how can truth be the same as working value? The belief that the earth is flat had and has and will have working value but was and is and will always be untrue. The pragmatist's view makes truth man-made and shifting and exhausts it of its real content. It is thoroughly anthropocentric and takes its stand on the declaration of Protagoras that "Man is the measure of all things".

Bergson on the other hand takes his stand on the famous maxim of Heraclitus that "everything changes". Change is reality and reality is change. He urges that the *elan vital* flows into ever-new forms and manifestations of energy. He shows that the brain is not consciousness but the organ of consciousness. But his assertions that there is no self at all, and that there is nothing which changes but there is only change, are opposed to the fundamental facts of our consciousness. How do we realise change? What is the back-ground of this cinema-procession of change? According to Bergson the Vital Surge is "a continuity of outflow" and has no beginning or end, no purposiveness or finality or consummation. He says that we realise this change

by "Intuition", and that Intellect carves out solid objects out of the living flow of reality. The intellect presents us an infinite number of static pictures like the cinema snapshot photographs, and then unrolls the film to our view. Bergson says that the intellect gives us a false view of reality for realising the ends which we desire. The weakness in his view is that he is not able to tell us what is the real nature of the *elan vital*? How can we assume a mere perpetual featureless becoming? Even if we assume it, why should our intellect carve out of it only one object and not another? Bergson thinks that the interrupted flow of the *elan vital* becomes matter. Why should there be any such interruption at all? Who causes such an interruption? What is the good of saying that the appearance of Solidity and Variety is an illusion created by the intellect? How can a featureless becoming be a ground-work for such illusion of variety? The intellect itself is a derivative of the featureless becoming. How does it then stultify its own ancestry? Further, Bergson's intuition is only instinct conscious of itself. In man it is a vanishing quantity and is being displaced by reason. Thus in course of time the true conception of reality will disappear. But it may be said that

there would come into existence an intuition verified by intellect. This is simply playing with words. Bergson is not familiar with the notion of the Atman or of the Superconscious realisation of truth.

I have thus taken up representative philosophers—especially representative modern philosophers—to make their views form the setting for the central coruscating diamond of Sri Sankaracharya's philosophy. The existence of innumerable erroneous views of truth and reality and value is thus stated by him as being the occasion for his setting forth his view of Truth. The passage occurs in his famous *Adhyasa Bhashya* :

एवमहंप्रत्ययिनमशेषस्वप्रचारसाक्षिणि प्रत्यगात्मन्यध्यस्य तं च प्रत्यगात्मानं सर्वसाक्षिणं तद्विपर्ययेणान्तःकरणादिष्वध्यस्यति । एवमयमनादिरनन्तो नैसर्गिकोऽध्यासो मिथ्याप्रत्ययरूपः कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वप्रवर्तकः सर्वलोकप्रत्यक्षः । अस्यानर्थहेतोः प्रहाणायात्मैकत्वविद्याप्रतिपत्तये सर्वे वेदान्ता आरभ्यन्ते ॥

The only satisfying solution of the ultimate problems about the nature of experience and perception and reality is that proclaimed by the mighty intellect of Sankara which is equally unique in

analysing and synthesising power. Reality is of three kinds *viz.*, (1) *Pratibhasika* (apparent or illusory) like the dream world, (2) *Vyavaharika* (phenomenal or practical) like the world in the waking state and (3) *Paramarthika* (noumenal or absolute). The first has the transiency of illusion; the second has the transiency of the ever-changing finite; but the third has the permanence of a changeless Infinite.

Sri Sankara clearly and daringly proclaims that in phenomenal perception the object is a real and vital factor in perception. He affirms in ringing tones the objectivity of what is apprehended in external perception. The material object in external perception is not a mere subjective projection upon a void or a formless chaos. Sri Sankara says in his commentry on the Brahma Sutras I. i. 4.

अतो न पुरुषव्यापारतन्त्रा ब्रह्मविद्या । किं तर्हि प्रत्यक्षादिप्रमाणविषयवस्तुज्ञानवद्वस्तुतन्त्रा ।...... ज्ञानं तु प्रमाणजन्यम् । प्रमाणं च यथाभूतवस्तुविषयम् । अतो ज्ञानं कर्तुमकर्तुमन्यथा वा कर्तुमशक्यम् । केवलं वस्तुतन्त्रमेव तत् न चोदनातन्त्रम् नापि पुरुषतन्त्रम् ।

The sum tatal of the phenomenal realities is meant by the concept of *Maya.* The entire realm of phenomenal reality is stultified by the realisation of the Atman. In the state of Atma Sakshatkara we reach a state which is beyond the dichotomy of Subject and Object and is pure *Satchidananda.* But to others enmeshed in *Avidya* the objectivity and externality of the phenomenal world continues in an unabated measure, just as the happy sleep of one man does not bring about the sleep of all or affect in the slightest degree the manifoldness and variety of their waking consciousness with all its bright patches of pleasure and dark patches of pain.

What is a higher kind of reality and what is a lower kind of reality? Sri Sankara declares that the causal reality is higher than the derivative reality. The famous example of *Mrit-pinda* (clod of clay) in the Chandogya Upanishad VI. i. 4. is well-known and illustrates the above truth. The Atman is One and Only and is the operative cause (*Nimitta Karana*), and the material cause (*Upa dana Karana*). This is the real essence of the famous *Vivarta Vada* of Advaita.

The specialities of Sri Sankara's doctrine consist in his rigorous and unwavering acceptance of the Veda as the Supreme Pramana or source of knowledge and in his harmonising of the Scriptural declarations about Reality. He says:

न हीदमतिगम्भीरं भावयाथात्म्यं मुक्तिनिबन्धनमागममन्तरेणोत्प्रेक्षितुमपि शक्यम् । रूपाद्यभावाद्धि नायमर्थः प्रत्यक्षगोचरः लिङ्गाद्यभावाच्च नानुमानादीनाम् ॥

Br. 2. 1. 2.

He further proclaims that the Supreme Advaitic *Anubhava* (realisation) can be attained here and now by Jnana resulting in Anubhava or Aparoksha Sakshatkara.

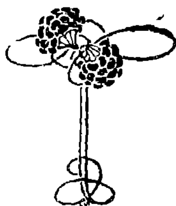
Not only is Sri Sankaracharya the upholder of Vedic authority and the preserver and vitaliser of Vedantic tradition. His all-inclusive and harmonising toleration is equally wonderful. He says in the *Mândukya Karika* (III. 17.)

अन्योन्यविरोधिभिः द्वैतिभिरस्मदीयोऽयं वैदिकः सर्वानन्यत्वादात्मैकत्वदर्शनपक्षो न विरुध्यते, यथा स्वहस्तपादादिभिः ॥

His doctrine is thus originally related to all reli-

gious systems and faiths and rules and ensouls them all. It has given a high place to *Karma* and *Bhakti* and *Yoga* as the indispensable means of the attainment of *Jnana* and has clearly declared the *Saguna* and *Nirguna* aspects of Brahman. Sri Sankara's pragmatism is not the barren pragmatism of those who would make Truth a series of caravansaries for the mind to rest in while going along an unknown road to an unknown goal but it is the pragmatism of the Spiritual man who ascends from value to value till at last he reaches the eternal and infinite radiance and bliss of Brahman.

आराधयामि मणिसंनिभमात्मलिङ्गं
मायापुरीहृदयपङ्कजसंनिविष्टम् ।
श्रद्धानदीविमलचित्तजलाभिषेकै-
र्नित्यं समाधिकुसुमैरपुनर्भवाय ॥



raised by the winds and tempests of Karma and allayed by the tranquillising touch of Nididhyasana or Samyama (which is a technical term in the Yoga Sastra for the triad—Dhyana and Dharana and Samadhi). Further, it teachs us not only the goal but the way also—be it the way of Karma Yoga or Raja Yoga or Bhakti Yoga or Prapatti Yoga or Jnana Yoga, which are all but aspects of Ananda Yoga. The practice of meditation is necessary, whichever be the path that appeals to us most, for it brings to us the vision and the aid of a Power greater than ourselves and full of infinite love and tenderness and compassion to us—a guide who will set our faltering feet on the right path and make our lonely and cheerless way a joyous quest of a blissful consummation.

II. The Synthesis of the Darsanas (Philosophic Systems).

It was the great Madhusoodana Saraswati that propounded in his *Prasthana bheda* the theory that as the sages who propounded the *Shad-darsanas* were all great, nay omniscient men, there could be no real clash among their views and that each of them stressed one aspect of Truth and pushed it into

prominence by the then known dialectic method of Purvapaksha-Siddhanta.

न हि ते मुनयः भ्रान्ताः, सर्वज्ञत्वात्तेषाम् ; किं तु बहिर्विषय-प्रवणानामापाततः पुरुषार्थे प्रवेशो न संभवतीति नास्तिक्य-वारणाय तैः प्रकारभेदाः प्रदर्शिताः । तत्र तेषां तात्पर्यमबुद्ध्वा-वेदविरुद्धेऽप्यर्थे तात्पर्यमुत्प्रेक्षमाणास्तन्मतमेवोपादेयत्वेन गृह्णन्तो जनाः नानापथजुषो भवन्तीति सर्वमनवद्यम ।

The Sankhya system of thought was designed to enable us to differentiate Prakriti from Purushas by means of its rigorous analysis of the ultimate constituents of the universe. It does not refer to God (Iswara) at all except to say that His existence cannot be demonstrated. The yoga system was designed to teach us how by concentrated meditation (samadhi) we can dissociate Soul from Matter. In it Iswara is neither the Absolute nor the Creator and Preserver and Destroyer of the Universe but is a Superior Purusha who can teach us the Truth and devotion to whom will lead us quickly to Samadhi and who is omniscient (निरतिशयं सार्वज्ञ्यबीजं) and whose name is Pranava (तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः). The Yogic goal is not absorption into Iswara but separation from Prakriti in and by Samadhi.

The Nyaya and Vaiseshika system form another pair of Darsanas. Nyaya (logic) is designed to focus the light of reason on the task of analysing the universe with a view to removing the cause of bondage and attaining the liberation of the soul. The Vaiseshika system perfects the atomic philosophy and concentrates on establishing similarities and dissimilarities between things. Both postulate Isvara as the efficient cause of the universe.

The Purva and Uttara Mimamsas form another pair of Darsanas. The Purva Mimamsa concentrates on Dharma and Karmas and on the attainment of *Swarga* (heaven) as the result of the performance of Karmas. It says nothing about Iswara, though because its author Jaimini is the disciple of Vyasa and because his views as noted in the Uttara Mimamsa show him to be a theist, we may well take him to be a theist. It is said that next to the Karma Mimamsa of Jaimini and prior to the Sariraka Mimamsa of Badarayana, there was a Devata Kanda or Samkarshana Kanda dealing with Upasana or worship. But it is not now found. The Sariraka Mimamsa or Brahma Sutras aim at giving us a clear statement of the nature of the soul.

In regard to the universe, there are and could be three theories *viz.*, the Arambha Vada (the theory of the union of atoms), the Parinama Vada (the theory of evolution), and the Vivarta Vada (the theory of apparent change). According to the Arambha Vada, the world is a *new* effect from certain pre-existing causes. It is held by the Nyaya and Vaiseshika and Purva Mimamsa schools. The Parinama Vada says that the effect existed in a subtle form in the cause and was later rendered manifest by the activity of the cause. It is the view of the Sankhya and Yoga schools. The Vivarta Vada says that Brahman merely appears as the world. It is the view of Advaita Vedanta. While the Sankhya system thinks that the world is the result of the evolution of Matter (Prakriti or Pradhana), the Visishtadvaita system of Vedanta says that the world is the evolution of Brahman (God). While the latter says that God is the material cause (Upadana Karana) as well as the efficient cause (nimitta karana) of the universe, the Dvaita system of Vedanta and Saiva Siddhanta say that God is the efficient cause while Matter is the material cause of the universe.

In regard to Advaita Vedanta, Max Muller says in his Six Systems of Indian Philosophy: "To sum up, the Vedanta teaches that in the highest sense Creation is but Self-forgetfulness, and Eternal Life is remembrance or Self-consciousness. And while to us such high abstractions may seem useless, for the many it is all the more surprising that, with the Hindus the fundamental ideas of the Vedanta have pervaded the whole of their literature, have leavened the whole of their language, and form to the present day the common property of the people at large." He says further: "The danger with Sankara's Vedantism was that what to him was simply phenomenal, should be taken for purely fictitious. There is, however, as great a difference between the two as there is between Avidya and Mithyagnana. Maya is the cause of a phenomenal, not of a fictitious world; and if Sankara adopts the *Vivarta* (turning away) instead of *Parinama* (evolution) doctrine, there is always something on which the *Vivarta* or illusion is at work, and which cannot be deprived of its reality." These passages contain much truth but not the whole truth. Vedanta has leavened the thought and influenced the life of India as a whole because it is a synthesis of

harmonious views of Reality, such views being had from ascending levels of experience and culminating in the supreme realisation of oneness (advaita). Vivarta is not mere illusion but is the appearance of the One as the Many.

When we come to Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhva, it is a wrong view to take them to be destroyers of Sankara's views. Sri Ramanuja is an Advaitin in some measure *i.e.*, a Visishtadvaitin. He posits an omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent Brahman who is full of infinite auspicious qualities and whose modes or aspects or forms or body are Chit and Achit *i.e.*, souls and matter. The souls have a subtle embodiment before creation and a gross embodiment after creation. Matter is subtle before creation and becomes later this stupendous and wonderful manifested universe. But in both states they are ensouled by God. Granting all this, how is Max-Muller entitled to talk of "the icy self-sufficiency ascribed to Brahman by Sankara"? How does the undifferentiated supreme eternal infinite Ananda negate Love and the manifoldness of Iswara and Jiva and Jagat? The two types or levels of experience differ and bring about these two

realisations but how does the one negate the other ? Philosophy is the ascent from the Many to the Few. Why should not Philosophy ascend further from the Few to the One ? Dvaita Vedanta fulfils itself in Visishtadvaita Vedanta, and Visishtadvaita Vedanta fulfils itself in Advaita Vedanta, just as the five Darsanas fulfil themselves in the Uttara Mimamsa Darsana.

Vijnana Bhikshu urges that though it is true that Nyaya and Vaiseshika represent the individual soul as endowed with qualities whereas Samkhya and Vedanta say that the individual soul is pure *chaitanya* (consciousness) and has not got qualities as its nature (*svabhava*), the main aim of Nyaya and Vaiseshika is not to attribute pain and pleasure to the soul but to show that the soul is really separate from the body and to lead up eventually to the realisation that pain and pleasure belong to the mind whereas the soul is pure *chaitanya* or Sachchidananda.

As already pointed out above, Madhusoodana Saraswati's view is that the sages wanted to lead us up to the concepts of Nirguna Brahman and Vivarta Vada, and created the various systems of thought as a ladder leading up to that top. He says that as

we could not immediately know and accept the highest *summum bonum*, they wanted to lead us step by step. Their main aim was to combat agnosticism and atheism and nihilism and to establish the supremacy of Scripture, because if the Pramana (means of knowledge) were established, the Prameya (Reality) would be surely obtained in course of time and by sure and successive stages (मानाधीना मेयसिद्धिः). Thus Truth is but one though the philosophies appear to be many.

III. The Synthesis of Religion and Philosophy and Science.

The Advaita system of thought is no doubt the essence of the Veda and takes its stand on Scripture. It aims also at the sublimation of conduct and at the kindling of Godward devotion and at using Nishkama Karma and Bhakti as feeders and tributaries of Jnana. But its special excellences which appeals to a modern mind in the modern age are its thorough harmony with modern science and its synthesis of Science and Philosophy and Religion.

Matter stopped with the atom for many centuries. But the atom has now got broken up into electrons and protons. "This too too solid earth"

threatens "to melt and thaw and resolve itself into a dew" without waiting for Hamlet's exclamation. The solidity of matter has vanished and what we have in its place is an electric charge or the radiance of energy. Balfour said wittily that not only has matter been explained but also that it has been explained away. Audacious Science has gone beyond its proved certainties and tries to explain away. Thought as a mere bye-product or epiphenomenon of Matter—a mere phosphorescence of Matter so to say. As has been splenetically and cynically said, the brain may secrete consciousness as the liver "secretes" bile or as the glow-worm "secretes" its phosphorescent light.

All this is a gain as well as a loss. It is gain because materialism and nihilism and agnosticism are as dead as the Dodo and what lives is a vast ocean of electric energy. It is a loss because such energy tends to be taken as the ultimate and hides from our view what is even subtler and more glorious than itself. As is stated in the opening sentence in the immortal Bhashya of Sri Sankaracharya on the Brahma Sutras, consciousness which is the subject and the universe which is the object are as diverse

and disparate as light and darkness. The famous axiom of Descartes—*Cogito ergo sum*—is the most fundamental thing in experience.

The Mind, in fact, plays a curious and hypnotic part. It presents us with successive and instantaneous static cross-sections of reality. In the language of Advaita Vedanta Maya has the Avarana Sakti and Vikshepa Sakti. It veils the Infinite Consciousness and projects the Finite Universe. Mr. Bertrand Russell says: "Since all definitions of terms are effected by means of other terms, every system of definitions which is not circular must start from a certain apparatus of undefined terms." Thus Consciousness is the really fundamental experience though it is an undefined term.

Mind and Matter are thus but two strains or stresses immanent in the ocean of Consciousness. They are like "opposed mirrors each reflecting each" in the hall of Being. Consciousness does not exclude Mind or Matter but exceeds and transcends both. It is not to be grasped by Reason like Mind and Matter but can be grasped only by Intuition. The intellect can deal only with cross-sections of the Infinite. But we can apprehend the Infinite only

by Intuition. Intuition is the response of the Soul to the Whole. Name and Form are the province of the Finite and are apprehended by the Intellect. The awareness of Being and Consciousness and Bliss (Asti, Bhati, Priyam, or Satchidananda) is due to Intuition. The Intellect belongs to the realm of the Relative ; but Intuition belongs to the realm of the Absolute. The Intellect veils the Infinite but the intenser light of the Infinite bursts through the lesser light of the Intellect. When the Intellect is calm and concentrated, the suffusion of it by the Intuition of the Atman is complete. The Atman is fully reflected in the Buddhi and eventually the evolute Buddhi is absorbed in the *causa causans* *viz.*, the Atma whose glory shines undivided, supreme, infiinite.

To vary the figure we may say that the mind aided by the senses acts as a prism refracting the white light of the Atman. We are likely to regard the prismatic resolution of the white light into the diverse charming rainbow tints as a loss or as a gain just as we like. The extreme pessimist may take one view ; the extreme optimist may take another view. The fact is that like Hinduism as a

whole, even Advaita Vedanta which is a fraction of Hinduism is of many brands. We have Drishti-Srishti Vada and its converse; we have the Eka Jiva Vada and Aneka Jiva Vada; we have Mula-Avidya Sthapana and Mula Avidya Nirasa; and we have the theory of immediate Nirguna Sakshatkara and the theory of Bimbesvarapatti. In any event the recomposition of the scattered and refracted tints of the Mind into the white light of Satchidananda is the Advaitic *Summum Bonum*.

To put the same truth in another form, self-consciousness must necessarily enter as the warp into the woof of sense-experience before there can be conscious realisation. It is the focussing of the rays of the Self on the objective experience that kindles the latter into the incandescence of Conscious Experience. Every realisation is a unity of the bridal pair *viz.*, Soul and Sense-Experience. It is a partnership in which the simultaneous activities of two partners inevitably and necessarily enter and co-operate and are co-efficients and co-ordinators and co-determinants of Experience. Stars unseen by the human eye or by the telescope exist but do not become factors of experience. Overtones and

undertones not seizable by the ear exist but do not become facts of experience. But let us imagine a state of being in which the infinite splendour of the Soul shines forth and does not need the channels of sense-experience. Let us imagine sense-experience itself as but a mode of that infinite consciousness, a wave of that ocean of Being. The stilled wave does not negate the sea.

Our conceptions of Space and Time have themselves to go into the crucible of Thought. Space is but a mode of thought. So is Time a mode of Thought. Things are in a ceaseless flux. But they enter into experience in statified but ever-shifting cross-sections. Einstein has enabled us to regard Space-Time as a single scaffolding used for the constructions of experience. He has made us realise that "point-events" with their "intervals" as the ultimate constituents of our experience of the universe. If we go deeper yet, Vedanta tells us that it is the self-stress in the infinite ocean of consciousness that is called Maya or Sakti or Prakriti and is the root of the manifoldness of things. Sakti or Maya or Prakriti is dynamic Brahman. Brahman is static Sakti.

Vedanta has gone beyond all other systems of

thought in coining terms that enable us to apprehend the fundamentals of experience. So long as we concentrate upon the waves and billows of the sea, the endless succession of dynamic forms engrosses our attention. Once we realise that the waves and billows are but the ocean, then we begin to concentrate on the fundamental aspect of the waves. The ocean aspect is called Satchidananda. The wave aspect consists of mind and matter, Nama Rupa, Time-Space-Causation, etc., which are of the stuff of our phenomenal experience. If we try to express Sat, Chit and Ananda by Being and Consciousness and Bliss, we catch but a fraction of the implication of those terms. The being that we know of is a segmented being. The mental states which flow on continuously and successively stand in relation to Consciousness in the position of waves to the sea. The dichotomies of pleasure and pain are in relation to Bliss but the bright half and the dark half of the month in the universal onward flow of Time. Heraclitus declared that we can never bathe in the same stream twice. The poet Browning says: "Never the time and the place and the loved one are all together". A well-known Sanskrit verse tells us that the past moments never return. The things

17

that seem so solid "flow from form to form" as beautifully described by Tennyson. But there is a Whole of which the ever-changing aspects of things are only parts. There is the Absolute of which all relative things are but fleeting manifestations. It is Brahman or Bhuma or Satchidanda. Negatively it is called *Neti Neti* (not thus, not thus), Akhanda (undivided), aditi (undifferentiated) etc. The limited centres of change in this Infinite Ocean of Bliss are due to Avidya Kama Karma to use the famous phrase of Sankaracharya. What is *Karma* from the limited point of view of the individual soul is called Lila or Kripa from the point of view of Isvara or God who is merely the Absolute Ananda viewed in relation to the sum total of souls and things. God is called Isvara because He is the creator and preserver and destroyer of the world. As the overlord of Souls, He is called Paramatma. As the power immanent in everything, He is called Antaryami. But the common denominator of the varying numerators of Isvara and Jiva and Jagat is Brahman or Satchidananda.

One of the finest peaks of western philosophic thought is its stress on values and especially on the

ultimate values of Beauty and Goodness and Truth. In the Scientist's stock-exchange only matter and motion may have currency. But there is a higher realm in which there is a different frame of reference. There Beauty and Goodness and Truth stand out as the Polestar with three-tinted rays flashing from it. All that seems evanescent and broken here are gathered and garnered up there. But even these ultimate values are, according to the Advaita, the modes of being or manifestation of Ananda (Bliss) which is the trans-valuation of all values.

The criticism is often advanced that the Advaita concept of Brahman is mere negation, and mere non-differentiated conceptual Being, and is unrelated to ethics and æsthetics. This criticism fails to realise that Impersonal means the same as Supra-personal. It really means an inability to rise above the equation of personality with Name and Form. It is only anthropomorphism in its subtlest state of self-delusion. Ananda (Brahman) transcends and therefore includes the Supreme Values of Beauty and Goodness and Truth.

I must say also that over-self-righteous Advaitic thinkers often imagine a gradation or degree of reality

between Apara Brahman and Para Brahman, between Saguna Brahman and Nirguna Brahman, and to exalt the latter over the former. In this connection let us remember the memorable Gita verse:

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ॥

There is no more difference between them than there is between acqueous vapour and rain. Further, though *Jnana* is affirmed to be the means of liberation, let us not forget that it is only the fruit,—the sap being sinlessness and purity of mind due to Karma Yoga and the flower being Bhaktiyoga. ईश्वरानुग्रहादेव पुंसामद्वैतवासना । Nay, a *Jnani* must be loving to all and serviceable to all when he is not immersed in Samadhi.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

Last but not least the Advaitic idea is not a theory but a realisation. That is why Sankaracharya prefers the words Anubhava, avagati and darsana to jnana. अवगतिपर्यन्तं ज्ञानं. The word ज्ञान (jnana) has not shed its merely mental associations. When the Supreme realisation which includes and transcends all other realisations comes, the individual soul

is aware of itself as the universal soul, nay, as Infinite and Eternal Bliss.

Thus Science has as its instrument the analytical mind, Philosophy has as its instrument the synthetic mind, and Religion has as its instrument Intuition. There should be no more incompatibility between these powers and aspects of the Mind than there is or could be among the Trinity (Trimurtis). The one begins where the other leaves off. Philosophy includes and completes and transcends Science; and Religion, in its turn, includes and completes and transcends Philosophy. Each is sovereign in its sphere but each higher power has a suzerainty over the lower powers. That is why Science should accept the over-lordship of Philosophy and why Philosophy should accept the over-lordship of Religion. Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita that He is the Science of the Soul among all the Sciences. (अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां)

Taking the category of Brahman we must realise that the Advaita system of Sankara synthesises the Absolute (Nirguna Brahman) and God (Saguna Brahman). It has achieved also the synthesis of the concepts of Prakriti and Purusha,

and of the triune aspects (Trimurti) of God. It has harmonised the transcendental and immanent aspects of Godhead. It has solved the ancient conundrum of God as the efficient cause and God as the material cause of the universe by declaring that He is both. It has harmonised also the conundrums about *Sat* and *Asat* and about *Karana* (cause) and *Karya* (effect). It is wrong to say that Isvara is regarded by Advaita as being unreal or as being a different Being other than Brahman. Brahman is Sat, Chit, and Ananda—not three but one, one in three and three in one.

It is not right to say that the Advaita empties the ego of reality or responsibility. The individual soul is an end in itself whereas the universe is a means (परार्थ). The soul in its phenomenal state is responsible for its actions and purifies itself by its ethical and religious disciplines. But when its self-purification by Karma Yoga is complete and when it attains concentration by Dhyana Yoga and when it attains the grace of God by Bhakti Yoga, it reaches the highest altitude of jnana where the triplicity of Knower and Knowledge and Known vanishes and the bliss of the Infinite and Eternal Brahman is realised.

It is equally incorrect to say that the Advaita attributes unreality to the world and calls it an illusion and that the Advaitin is a crypto-buddhist (Prachchanna Bauddha). The word used by it in regard to the world is Mithya and not Tuchcha or Asatya. There is a great deal of Maya about Maya. According to Sri Sankaracharya, Maya is not illusion but is Bhava Roopa (positive entity) and we cannot postulate about it that it exists or that it does not exist, because it does not exist for ever but is stultified by jnana and because it produces effects and is therefore not a mere illusion. Two well-known lines of verse give us the essence of the Advaita philosophy :

दृष्टिं ज्ञानमयीं कृत्वा पश्येद्ब्रह्ममयं जगत् ॥
ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ॥

